# THE COST OF DOCS

2023

# CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

**Welcome to the sixth edition of The Whickers' Cost of Docs Survey. This report looks specifically at the changing landscape for documentary makers in the UK and internationally.**

In addition to our work funding and supporting emerging talent around the world, we seek to champion documentary makers and to amplify their voices in the industry as a whole. The initial aim, back in 2016, was to ensure that our main funding award, now £100,000, was still the game-changing amount that we wanted it to be. Since then, we have added new questions to continue evaluating and confronting the challenges faced by filmmakers in uncertain times.

**Key questions:**

- How far does The Whickers' top Funding Award of £100,000 go in today's market?
- What are the main challenges facing documentary filmmakers in 2023?
- How have things changed, year by year, since the first edition of the Cost of Docs Survey in 2016?

The survey was completed anonymously by 74 self-selecting documentary makers. Some questions allowed respondents to choose multiple options, whilst others were not applicable to all, therefore percentages may not always add up to 100%.

You will find a copy of the original survey questions in the appendix.

If quoting from this report, please credit The Whickers. Contact **info@whickerawards.com** for any queries or to request a copy of the five previous editions of the Cost of Docs report.

Written and designed by Curtis Gallant, Emily Copley and Jane Ray. With grateful thanks to Sheffield DocFest and International Documentary Association (IDA) for supporting the distribution.

# KEY FINDINGS

**Below is a summary of the key findings:**

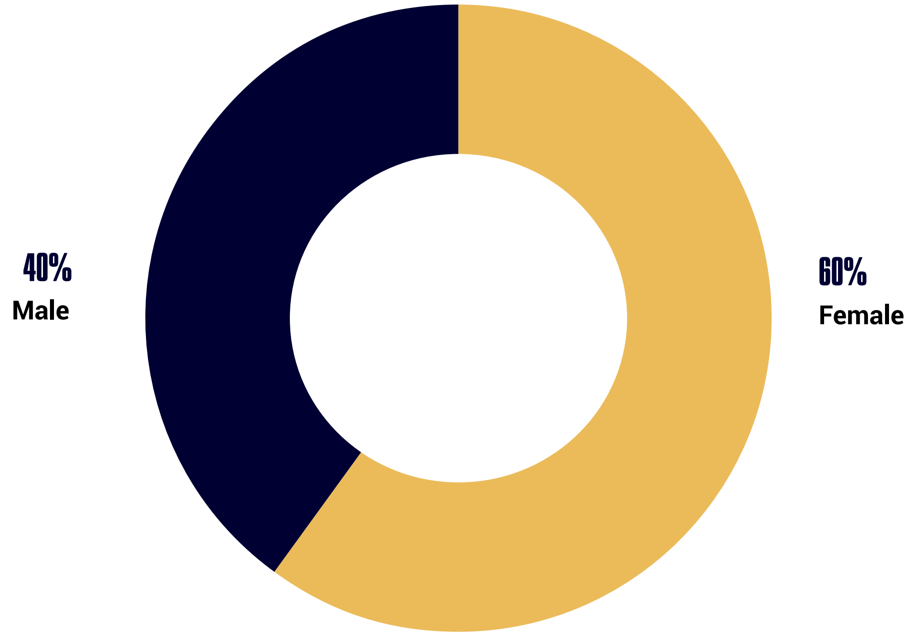
- 54% say that the cost-of-living crisis is seriously jeopardizing their ability to continue making documentaries.
- This is the same percentage as those who say they had mental health issues when making their last documentary, while 38% of those who say they need support also say they cannot afford it.
- 5% of respondents say they have already left the business due to the cost-of-living crisis, whilst 4% say they have been unaffected.
- Since the first Cost Of Docs survey there has been an almost fivefold increase in the number of documentary makers who take part-time jobs in an unrelated industry to make ends meet.
- Only half as many are managing to complete their documentaries in under 6 months (14%, down from 29%).
- More than half of respondents (59%) now say that they learn their skills "on the job".
- There are signs that documentary makers are valuing their time more. In 2022 just 2% said £60,000 would have been a fair wage for the time and effort they put into making their documentary. Today that figure is 15%.
- Only 11% estimate that their time on their last documentary was fully paid for. Nonetheless, the gulf between reality and what people feel they ought to be paid is narrowing. Last year, the average respondent felt that they had been paid just 36% of what they should. This year the same figure is 42%.
- Budgets are rising: just 19% of documentaries are being made for under £10k compared to 31% in 2019. Meanwhile, 13% now have budgets over £400k.
- Costs are soaring too. Across all the 18 categories of expenditure measured, prices are higher. The biggest leap was for international travel. There has been a corresponding drop from 70% to 46% of documentary makers budgeting for venturing abroad.
- Funders are demanding more. In 2019 only 1% of funders demanded full or partial rights ownership as a condition. In 2023 that figure has risen to 29%.
- More than a quarter of funding applications are unsuccessful. Less than 14% were awarded over £50,000.
- Doc Society has taken the place of broadcasters (33%) as the most common source of funding  with 34%, shortly followed by Sundance (32%) and Catapult Film Fund (32%).
- The use of crowdfunding continues to rise year-on-year, with more than a quarter now raising funds this way. On average, crowdfunding raised 20% of films' budgets.
- One of the truly bright spots we found is that documentaries are increasingly finding a paying audience. This year just 31% had not found such an audience, compared to 63% in 2019.

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

## GENDER

This survey aimed to find out more about the respondents themselves - their ages, ethnicity and country of residence. **We asked respondents to identify their gender (Q56)** - revealing that 60% of respondents identified as female (56% in 2021/22), 40% as male (41% in 2021/22), and none as transgender/non-conforming (1% in 2021/22).

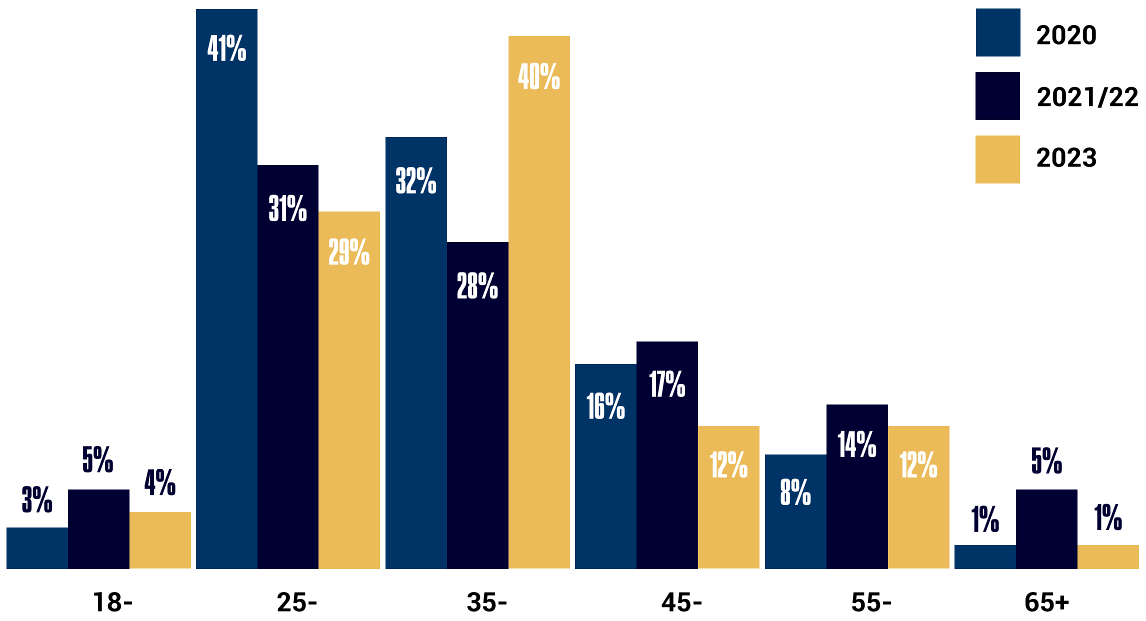
Although we cannot firmly conclude that this is reflective of the gender make-up of the documentary industry as a whole, it is useful to keep in mind when digesting the forthcoming data.




## AGE

As in previous years, **we asked respondents to identify their age (Q55)** and unlike previously, our greatest proportion of respondents is no longer in the 25-34 age bracket (29%), but rather the 35-44 age bracket (40%). The majority of those who took this survey were in their mid-twenties to mid-forties. Fewer respondents fell into the 45-54 and 55-65 age brackets (12% each), and very few into the 18-24 and 65+ brackets (4% and 1%). This year's figures on age are fairly consistent with previous surveys. It suggests that documentary production is predominantly carried out by those in their thirties and forties.

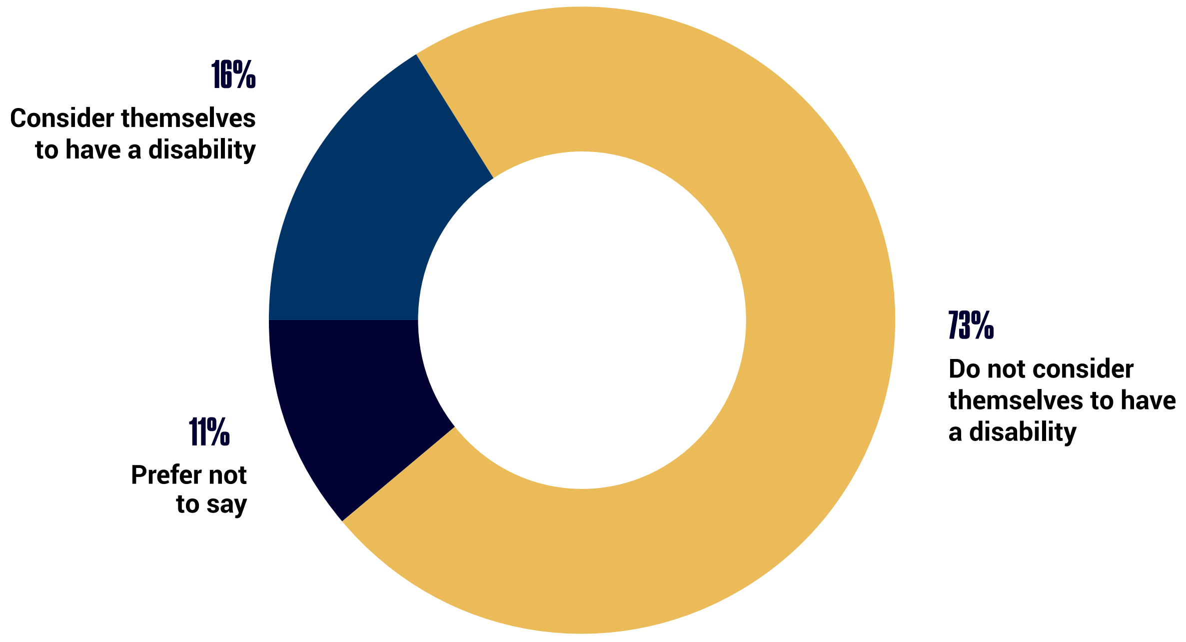
One respondent told us that *"there is horrible ageism in documentary filmmaking."* However, they are *"not sure how to fix [it because] youth is so prized as if experience is a limitation to creativity and imagination."*



# DISABILITY

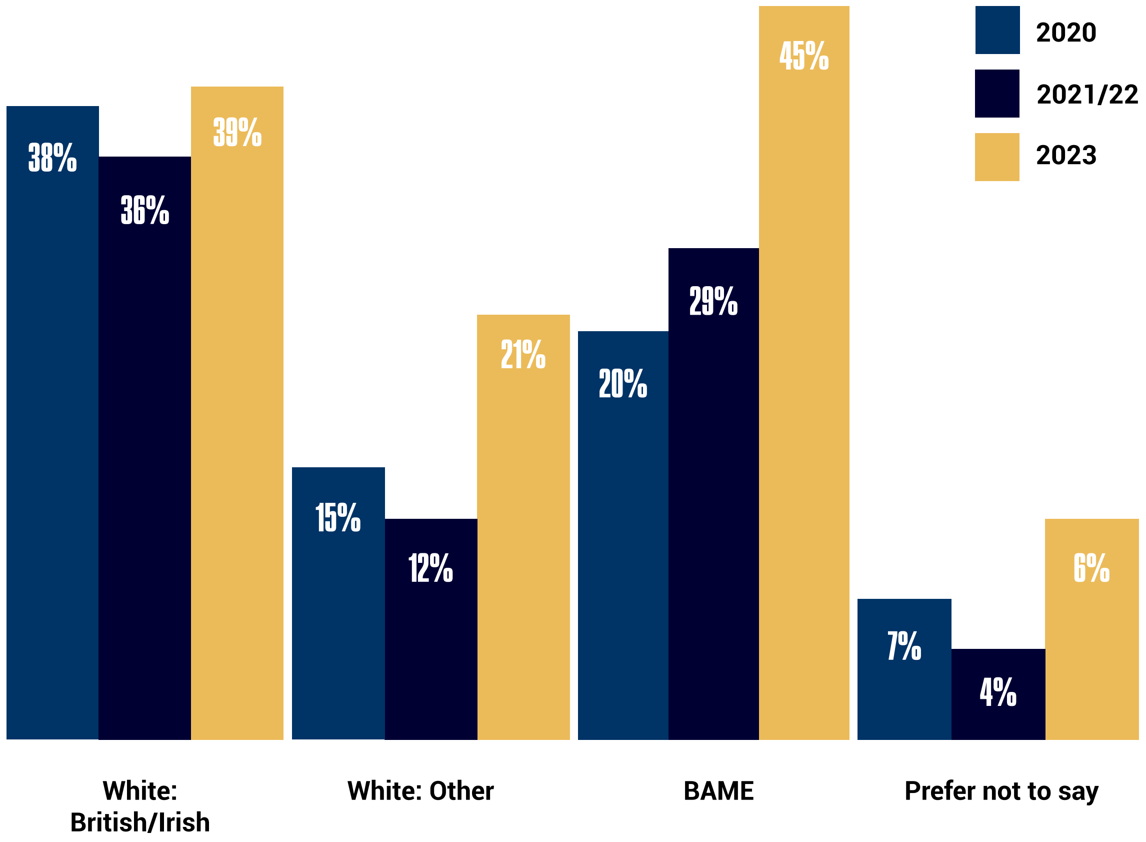
**We also asked respondents whether they consider themselves to have a disability (Q58)**. 16% responded that they did, 73% that they did not, whilst 11% preferred not to say. These figures are worth bearing in mind in relation to this survey's findings regarding accessibility and discrimination.

It would also be useful to keep in mind when digesting the forthcoming data that one respondent stated that *"we need more understanding and reasonable adjustments for disability & neuro-divergence throughout the funding process and beyond."*




# ETHNICITY

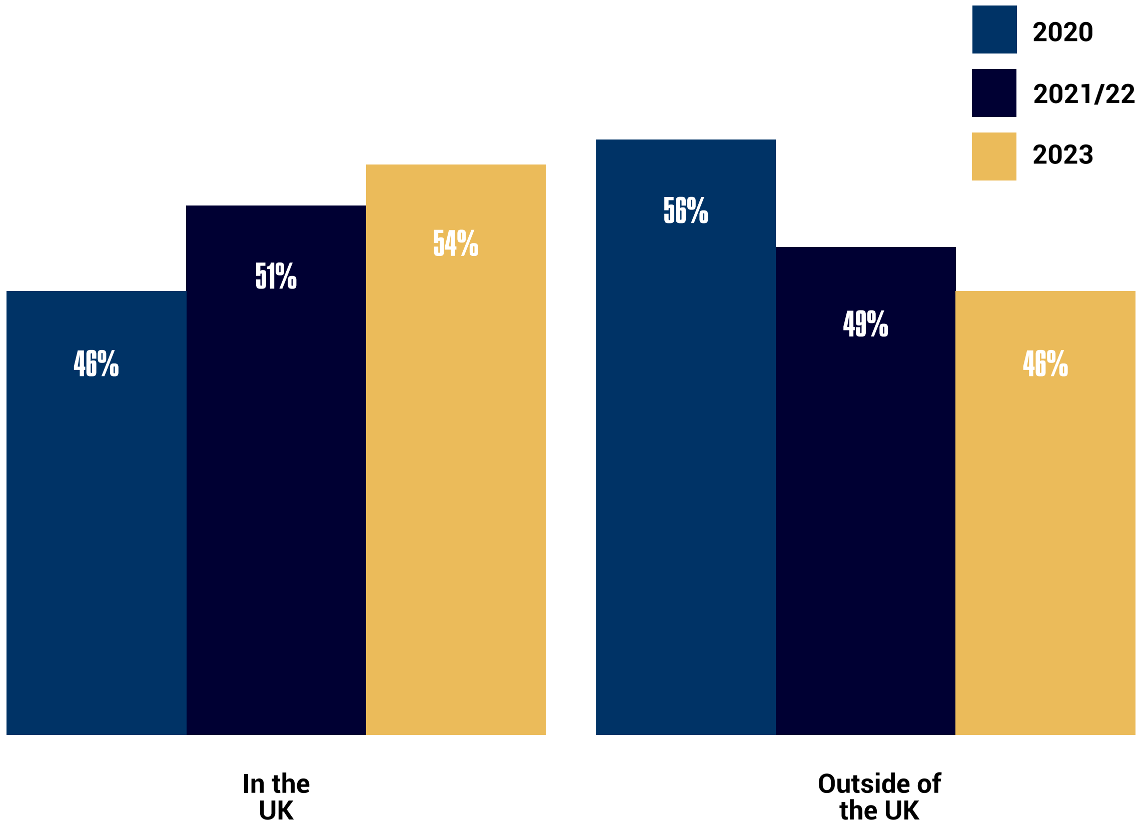
**This question sought to identify the ethnicity of our respondents (Q57).** Respondents to the Cost of Docs survey in 2023 were predominantly white. This year the figure was 59%, compared to 48% last time. This consists of 38% White British, 1% White Irish and 21% from other white backgrounds. The number of BAME respondents has increased since last year by 16% to 45%. Of the 45%, one notable statistic is that 12% identify as Latin American. 10% of respondents are African, whilst 7% are Indian and another 7% identify as being from multiple ethnic groups.



## COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE

**We also asked respondents for their country of residence (Q4).** It is interesting that a UK-based organisation with the help of a UK-based documentary festival (Sheffield DocFest) attracts almost half of its respondents from outside the UK (46%). This is a slight decrease from the 49% of non-UK resident respondents last year. The high number of international respondents is helped by the continuing convention that recognises English as the global language of the documentary industry. However, some respondents challenge the cost of this assumption. (See quote on page 9).

This year we had responses from various different parts of the UK and a wide range of countries. These include Argentina, Benin, Bulgaria, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Kenya, India, Mexico, Myanmar, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago and the United States. However, it is worth noting that this survey was conducted only in English and thus cannot encompass the full diversity of global documentary makers.






“CONSIDER THE COST OF EXPLAINING OURSELVES WHEN ENGLISH IS NOT OUR FIRST LANGUAGE. ADAPTING TO THE FORMATS AND EDITORIAL LINES FOR FUNDS AND FESTIVALS, ALL THOSE TRANSLATIONS! HOW TO APPLY IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE? WHO BEARS THE COST? I FEEL THERE IS A RISK IN THIS ‘MONOLINGUAL’ WORLD.”

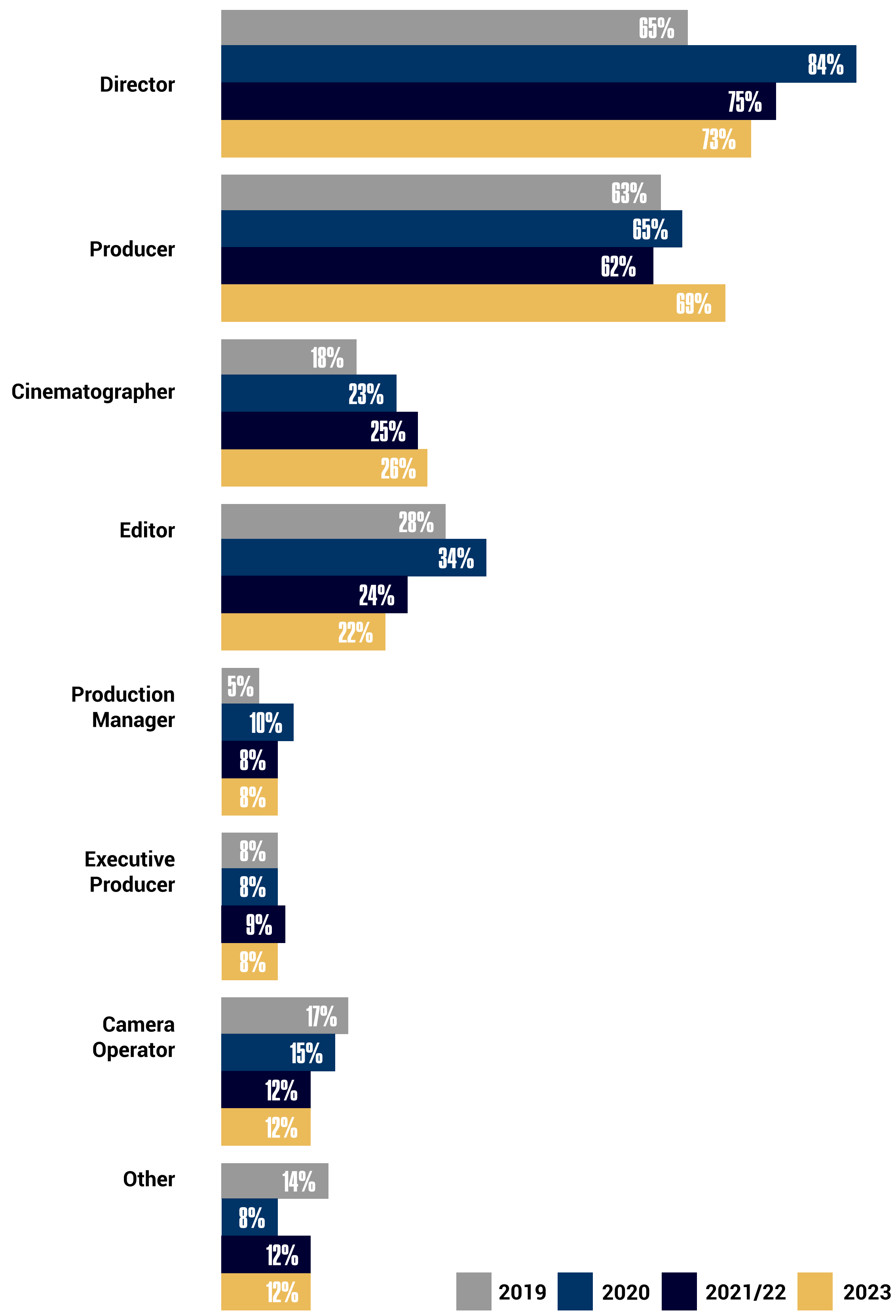
# ROLES & EXPERIENCE

## PROFESSIONAL ROLE

As in the previous year, when **we asked respondents what their professional roles were (Q1),** the majority of respondents identified as "Directors" and/or "Producers", 73% and 69% respectively. The number of directors has decreased and the number of producers has grown since last year  (75% Directors versus 62% Producers in 2022). Respondents were able to tick multiple categories and most did so. This chimes with a continuing trend towards multi-tasking. Respondents say that they are "doubling up" on roles due to the rising production costs.

The survey was also completed by Cinematographers (26%), Editors (22%), Camera Operators (12%), Executive Producers (8%) and Production Managers (8%). None of those who participated in the survey were commissioners. These proportions are in line with previous years.

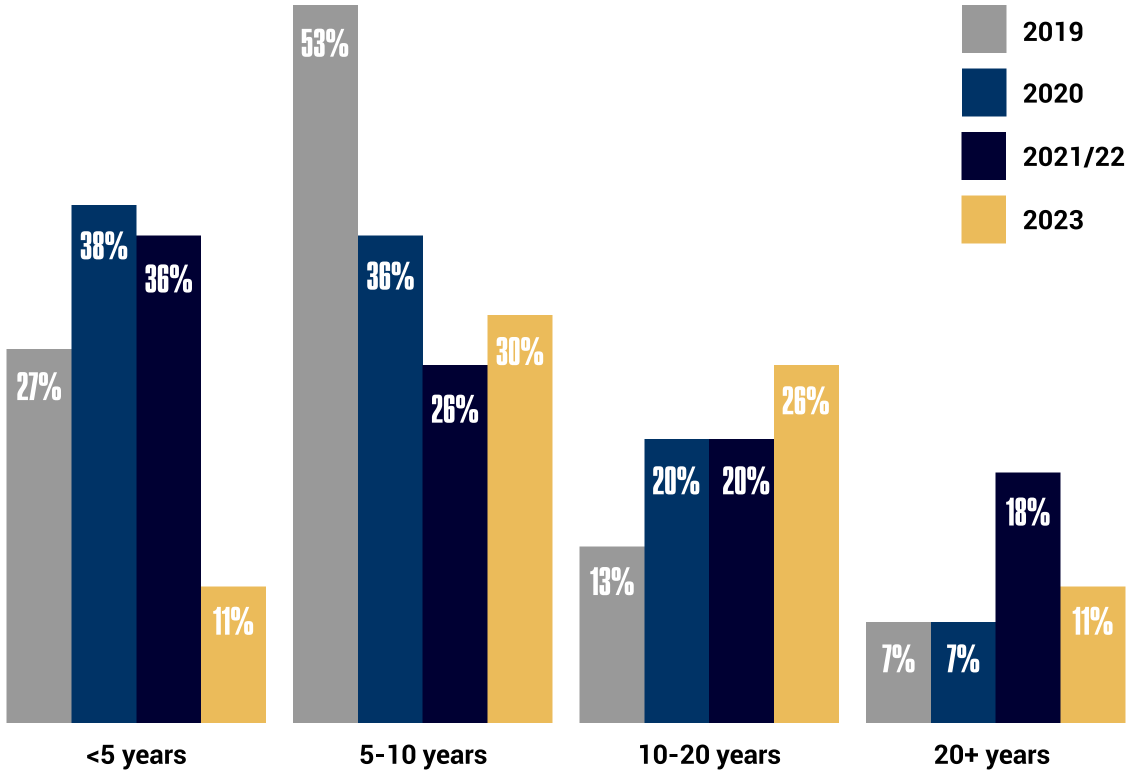
(See data on page 11).



# EXPERIENCE

We asked respondents **how many years they had worked in the documentary film industry (Q2)** and answers were evenly distributed. The most common selection was 5-10 years (30%), but there is also a significant number who have been in the industry for over 20 years (11%), as well as those with less than 5 years' experience (also 11%). This represents a broad spectrum of perspectives and enables our survey to encompass the challenges faced by all documentary makers, regardless of where they are in their careers.

It is notable however that there are significantly fewer experienced respondents in the survey compared to last year. In 2019 53% of respondents had 5-10 years of experience. This is a drop of 23%. Meanwhile those with over 20 years' experience fell from 18% to 11%. It is not possible to draw firm conclusions from this but such a "brain drain" of the most experienced may be reflective of those who say that rising costs have forced them out of the industry.

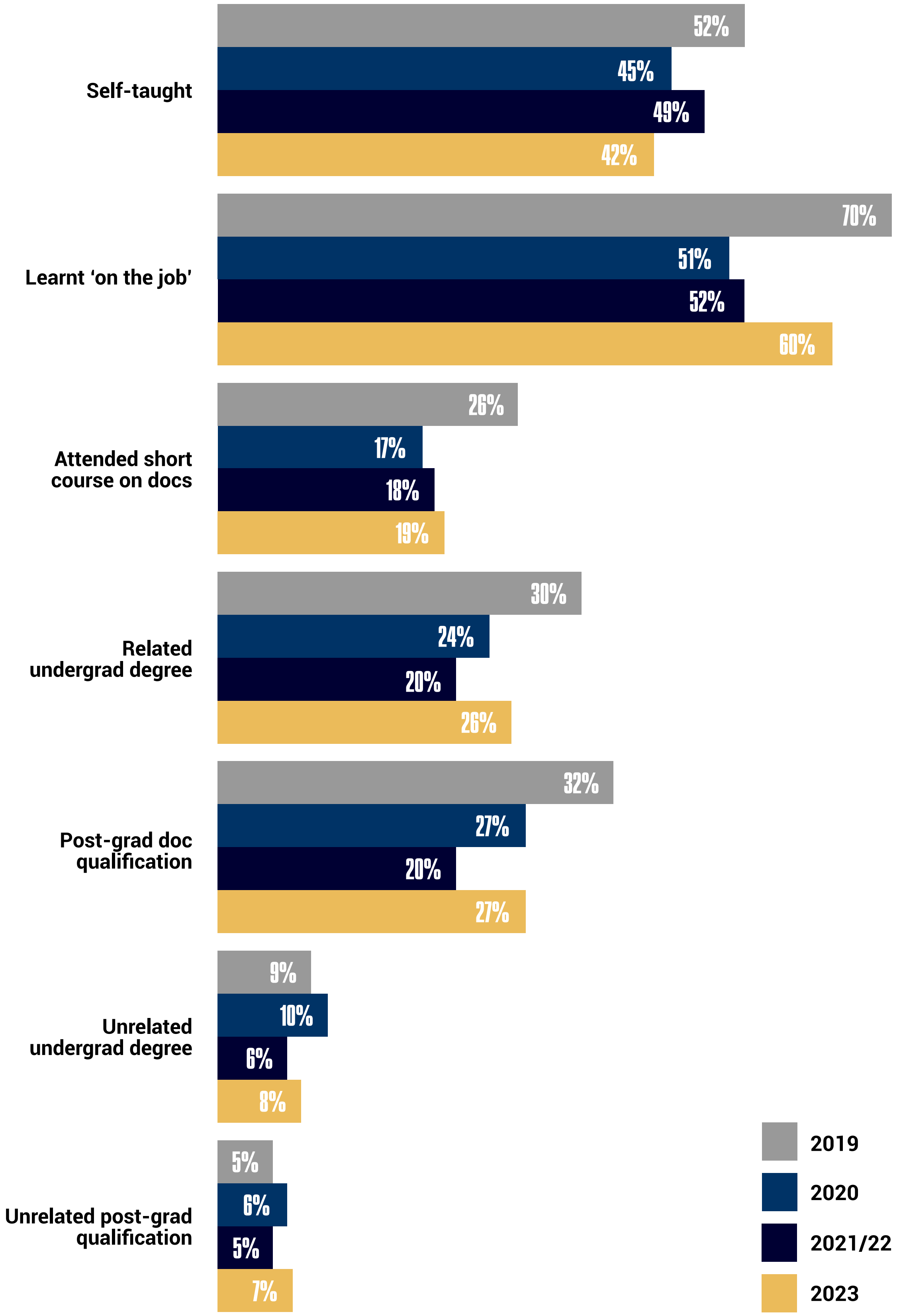



# TRAINING

**The survey aims to gauge the level of documentary skills training undertaken by our respondents (Q3).** The figures show that there has been an increase in studying documentary at university, as well as learning on the job.

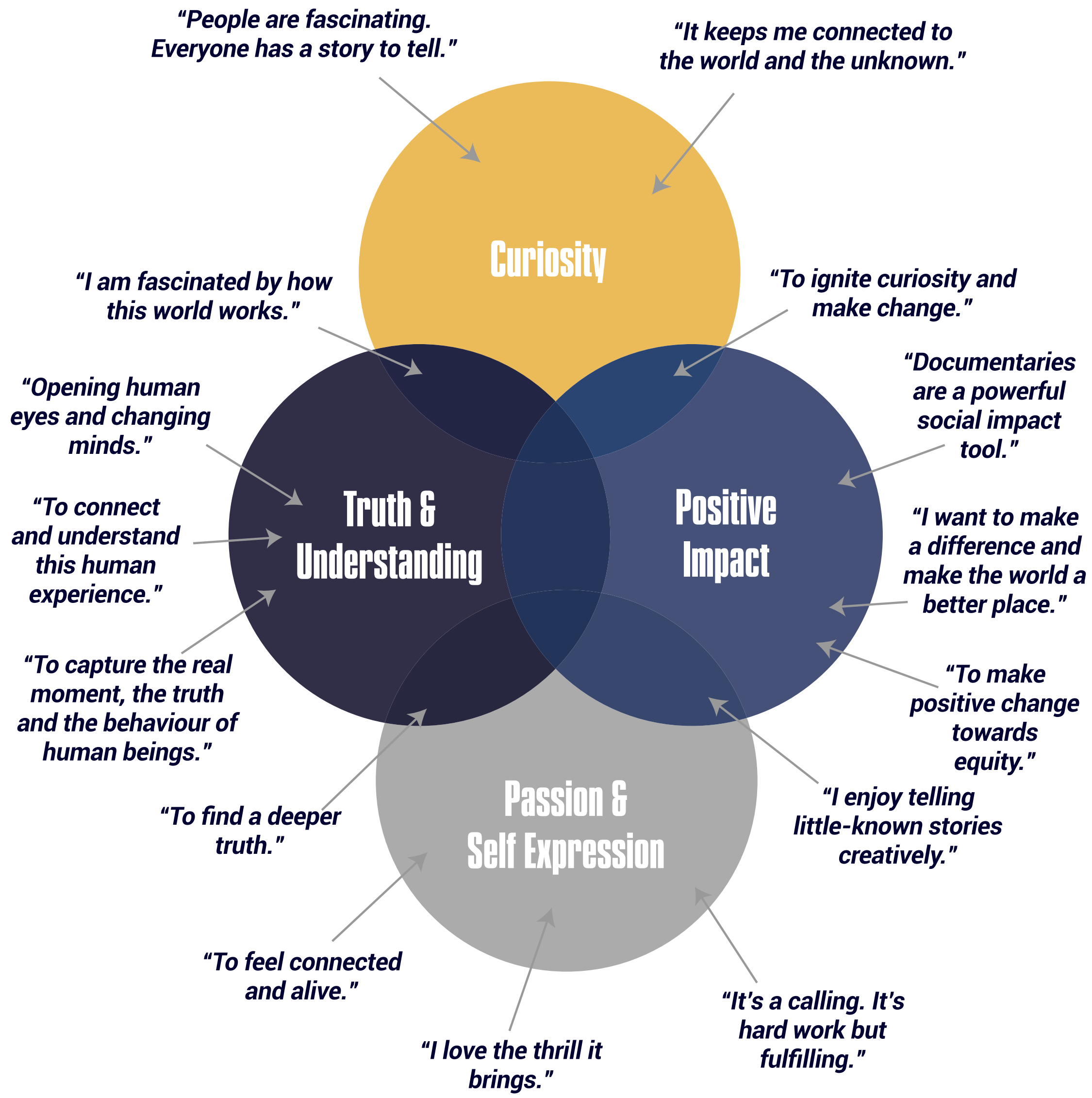
We discovered that well over half of respondents (60%) said that they learnt their documentary skills 'on the job'. This is an increase of 8% from last year. Nonetheless, there has been an 7% drop in those who consider themselves self-taught (49% to 42%). Meanwhile, there has been a 6% rise in respondents taking a related undergraduate degree course in documentary making, as well as in related post-graduate degrees. Both figures rose from 20% to 27%, suggesting that as documentary courses become more widely taught, they are leading people into the industry. Respondents referenced institutions from Kenya to the United States and doc courses from Wales to Cuba.

(See data on page 14).



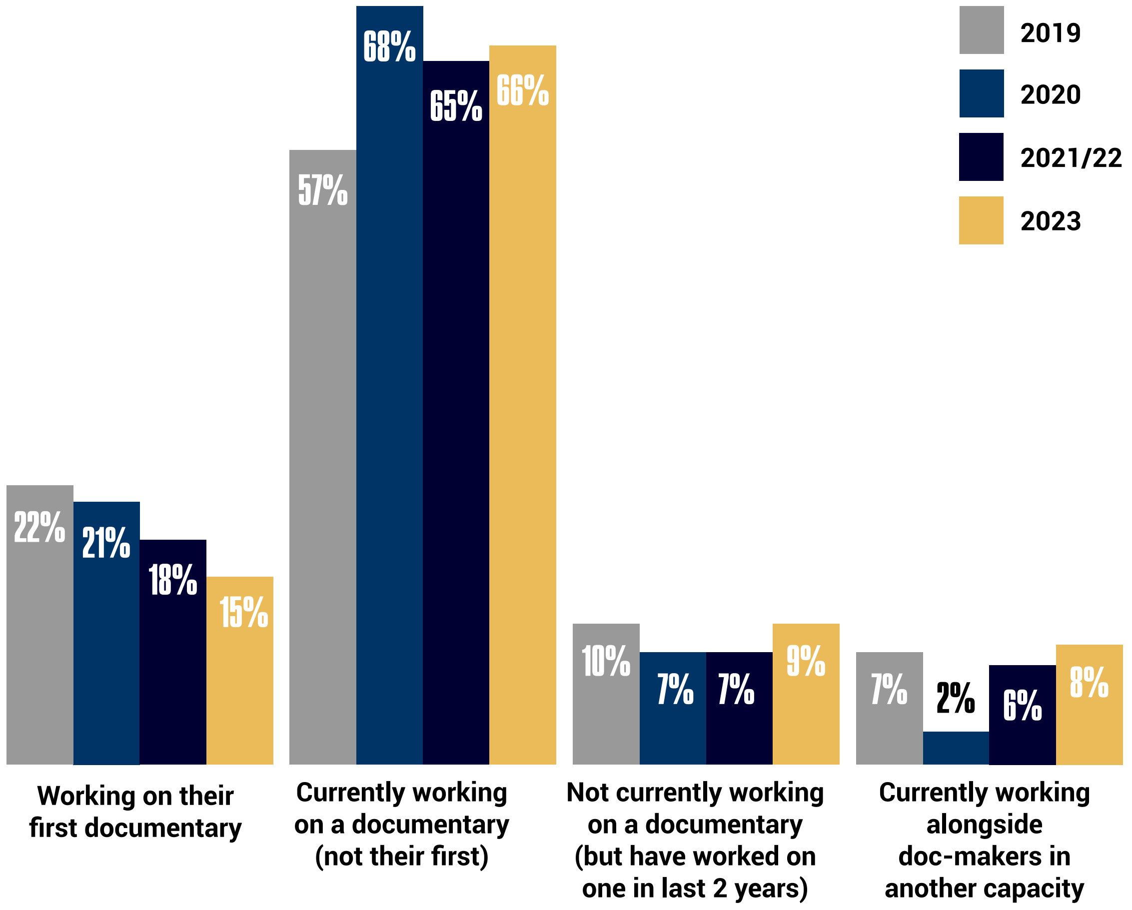

# WHY DO YOU MAKE DOCUMENTARIES?

Having established the background and training of our respondents, **we sought to learn more about why exactly our respondents made documentaries - in just seven words or fewer (Q6)**. The varied responses fell predominantly into four main camps, with much overlap between them: curiosity; truth and understanding; positive impact; and passion and self-expression.



# ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON A DOCUMENTARY?

**We asked respondents if they are making a documentary right now or if they have made one in the last two years (Q7)**. We ask this question in order to gauge how current their experience is. Never before have we had so few documentary makers respond who are completing their first documentary (15%, down from 22% in 2019). Coupled with that statistic is another: 9% of our respondents are not currently working on a documentary. This may be partly down to the aftermath of the Covid lockdown, but possibly also due to the rising cost of docs. Our data sample is too small to determine but taken in tandem with later responses about running costs and available funding, a fuller picture emerges.





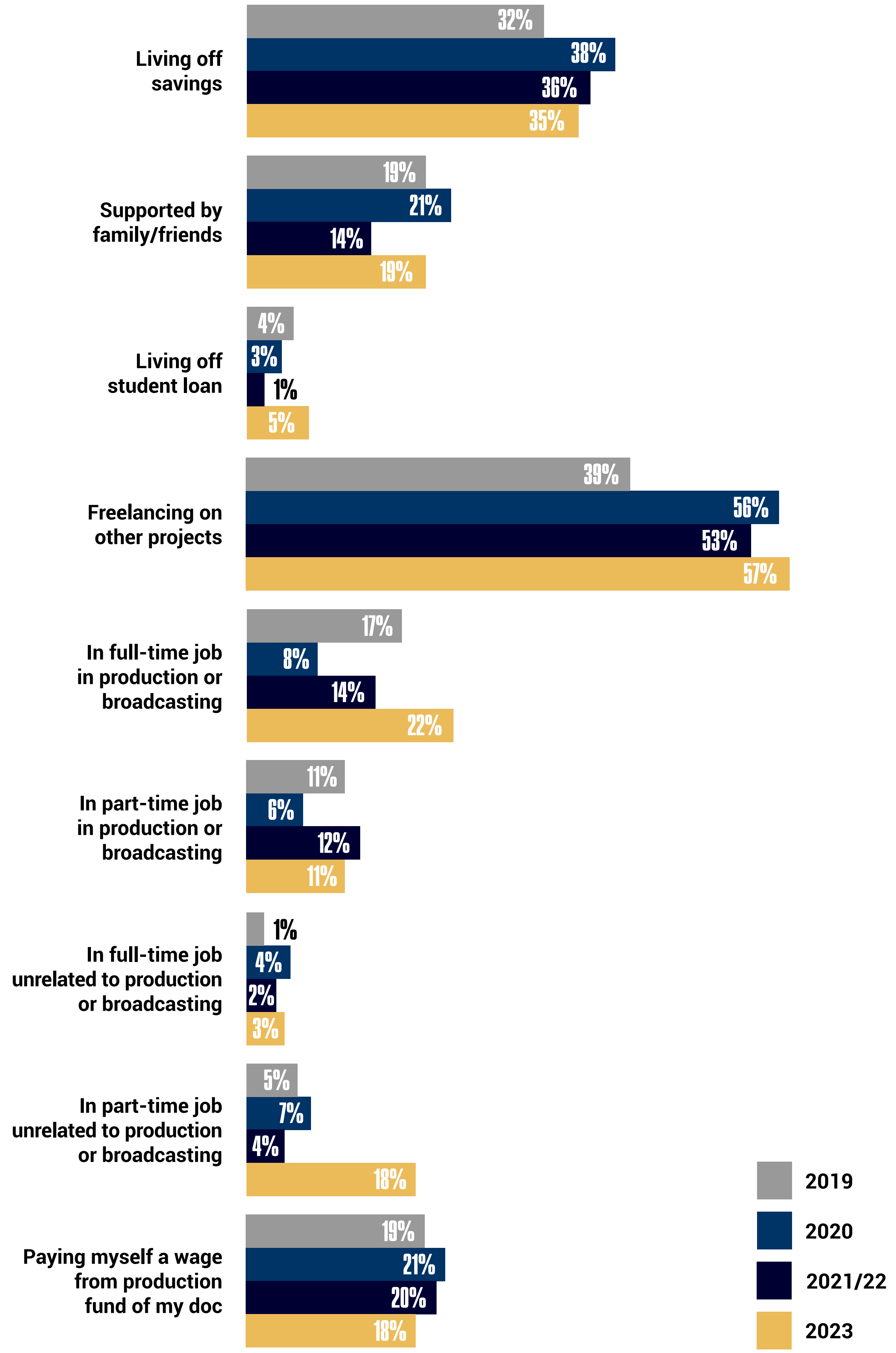

> “EVERYTHING IS CONSIDERABLY MORE EXPENSIVE, BUT BUDGETS FROM FUNDERS AND BROADCASTERS ARE FLAT. SO THE QUALITY AND SCOPE OF WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED SUFFERS.”

# FINANCE & FUNDING

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**This question was directed at those respondents who are currently making documentaries. It aims to determine how they are making enough money to live on for the duration of this endeavour (Q9).** Respondents were invited to tick all options that applied. Similar proportions as previous years report survival by freelancing on other projects (57%) and living off their savings (35%). These remain the two main sources of income for independent doc makers. The key change this year is the far higher number who are working in part-time jobs unrelated to production or broadcasting in order to make ends meet. This year's figure is 18%, having been 4%, 7% and 5% in previous surveys. This is a dramatic fivefold single-year increase in documentary makers having to earn money in unrelated industries. There has also been a rise in the number of those being supported by family or friends. Having dipped to 14% last year, the figure is now back to 19%. Meanwhile the number with a full-time job in production or broadcasting has risen 8 percentage points to 22%.

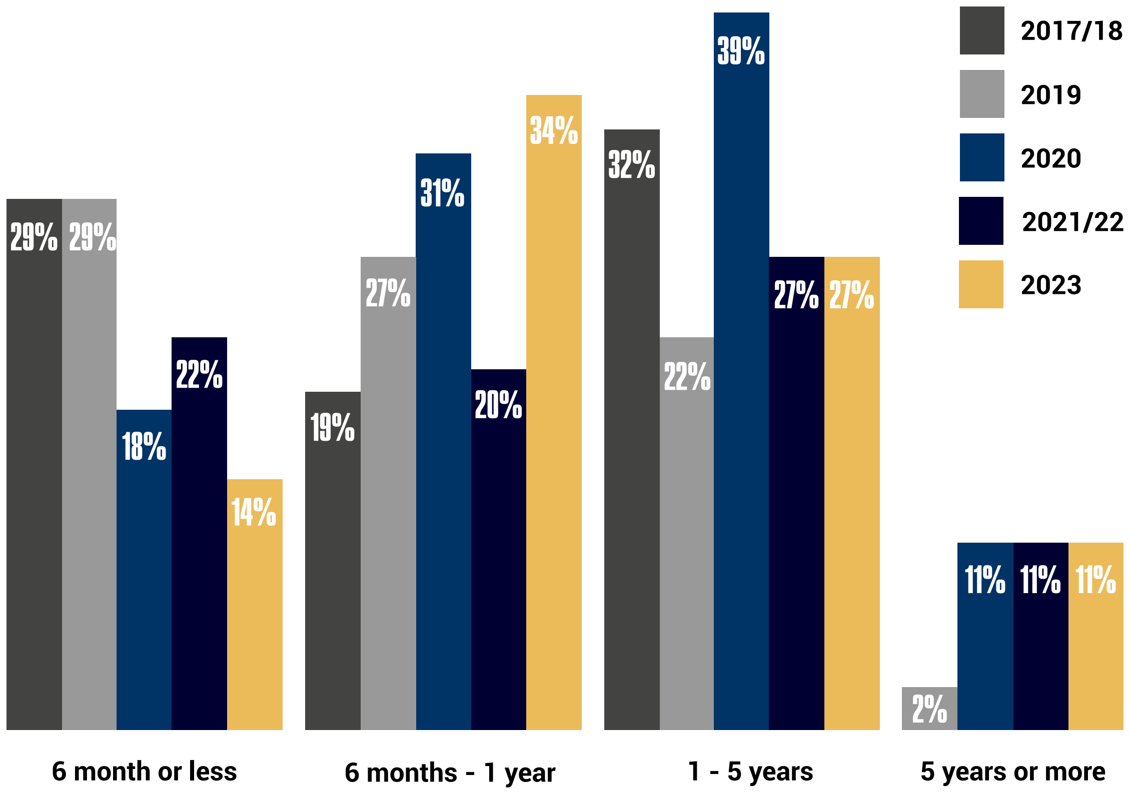
(See data on page 19).



## TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE A DOCUMENTARY

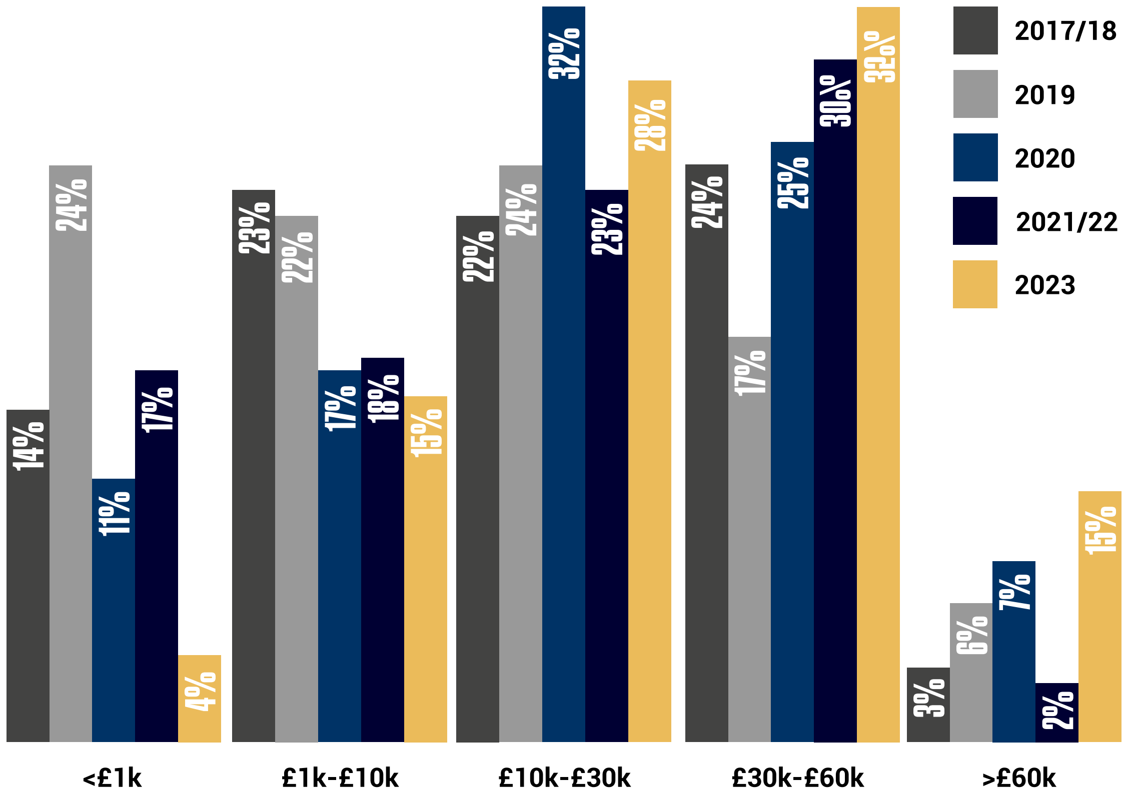
Next, **we wanted to know how long it took respondents to complete their last documentary (Q10).** The big difference this year is that far fewer respondents report completing their documentary in less than six months. Previous years have seen the percentage of respondents as high as 29%. Now just 14% say they completed their films so quickly. This is despite the fact that 34% of documentaries being made were less than 30 minutes in duration. This figure should be seen in conjunction with the previous graph showing a dramatic rise in part-time working unrelated to documentary.

At the other end of the scale, and for the third survey in a row, the proportion of documentaries taking over 5 years to make remains static at 11%. Before the Covid-19 pandemic this figure had been as low as 2%. Whilst many of this year's respondents made short documentaries, the most common target duration was feature length of between 60 and 90 minutes (28%).



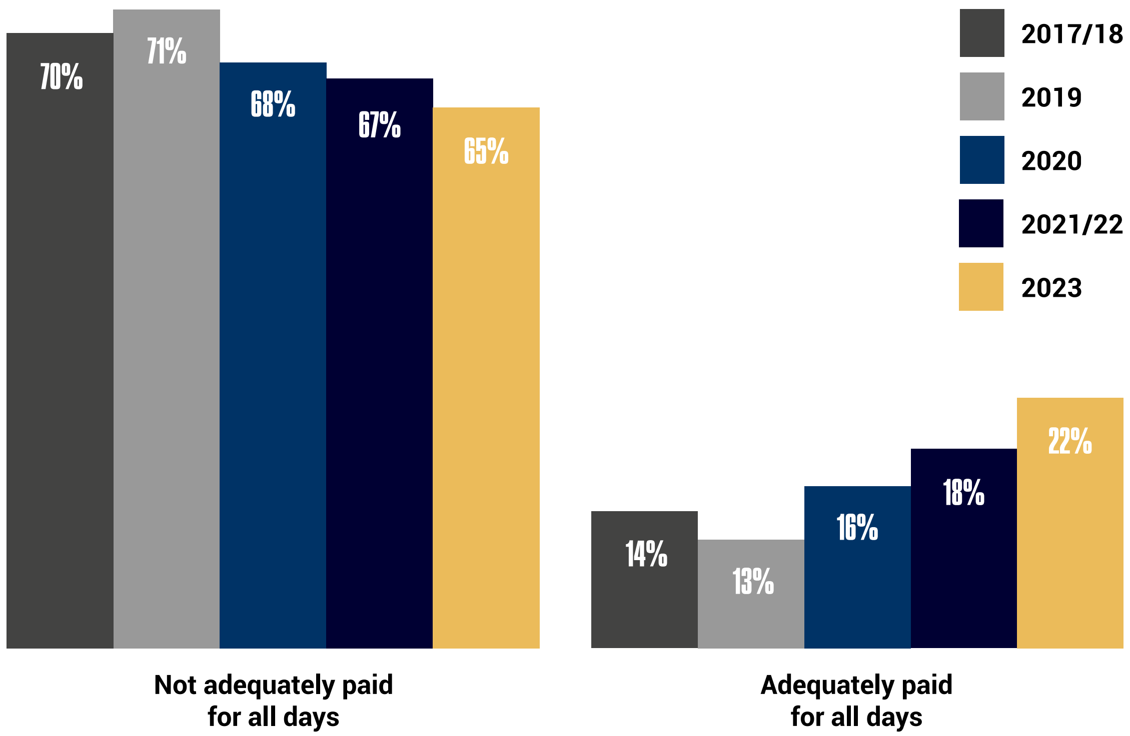

## COST OF TIME TAKEN

Another way to look at the outlay and return involved in creating a documentary was to ask respondents to **estimate how much their time would have cost if they were paid for every day dedicated to working on their documentary (Q13).** Here we see signs that documentary makers are valuing their time more than in previous years. Last year just 2% felt that over £60k would be appropriate – that figure is now 15%. On the other end of the scale, just 4% of respondents valued their work as less than £1,000. By contrast, almost a quarter of those who responded in 2019 said that such a small amount would be acceptable. The category estimating their value to be between £30k-£60k is the most common, rising year-on-year from just 17% in 2019 to 32% this time. However, the uplift in the self-evaluation of the documentary maker's time needs to be seen in the context of soaring production costs and not just as an affirmation of perceived 'worth'.



# PERCEIVED AND ACTUAL RENUMERATION FOR DOCUMENTARY WORK

**The following question continues our exploration of a documentarian's perceived worth and aims to gauge whether or not respondents felt they had been adequately paid for all of the days that they had spent working on their most recent documentary (Q14).** This question is of course subjective and relies heavily on respondents having a solid idea of their professional market value. But it is also a helpful indication of the gap between the wages that documentary filmmakers are actually receiving, and the wages that they believe that they are owed for their time and expertise. This year's results demonstrate that respondents still feel that they are not being appropriately paid for the work that they are doing. Only 22% of respondents felt that they had been paid 'properly' on their last project, so over three quarters of respondents have an issue with pay. Nonetheless, this marks an improvement on previous years where less than a fifth felt that they had been properly renumerated. This suggests that some in the industry have been able to achieve fair pay despite the challenges. This is a hopeful sign, although the gulf between what people earn and what they feel they ought to earn remains wide.



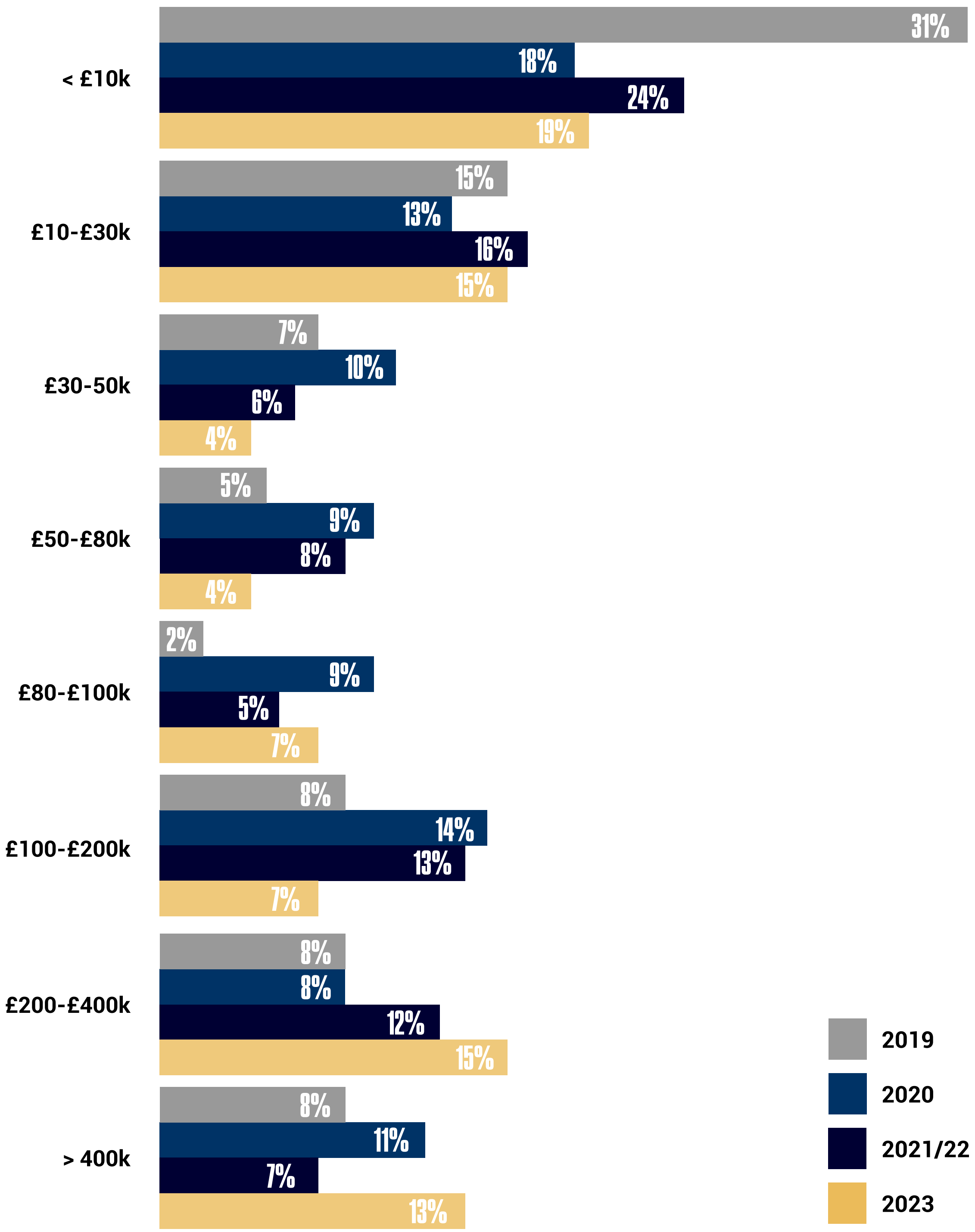



# WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR TIME WERE YOU PAID FOR ON YOUR LAST DOCUMENTARY?

For a slightly different angle, we asked respondents to estimate what percentage of their time they felt they had actually been paid for on their previous documentary project (Q15). Answers ranged from 0% to 100%, with an average answer that respondents felt that they had been properly paid for just 41% of their time. This is an increase of 5% from last year's figure of 36%, and an improvement of 8% from 2020's figure. The fact that documentary makers feel they are being paid for less than half of their time is still concerning, but the fact that it is creeping up from just 33% indicates a positive change. However, only 11% felt they were fully paid for the work they had done. Many verbatim quotes around this question stressed that it was the ongoing uncertainty about pay rather than the amount of pay that led to the biggest stress on their working lives.


# THE COST OF MAKING A DOCUMENTARY

Our next set of questions aimed to find out if documentaries are costing more to make than last year, and if so, what factors are driving those costs? A good indication of increased cost is the **size of the prospective budget (Q17)**. At the lower end of the scale, 19% of respondents said they were making their documentary for less than £10k. Last year that figure was 24%, suggesting that such low budgets are becoming less viable. At the other end of the scale there has been a marked increase in the number of respondents working on projects with a budget over £400k. This figure has shot up from 7% to 13%. 8% of respondents worked with budgets over £800k.



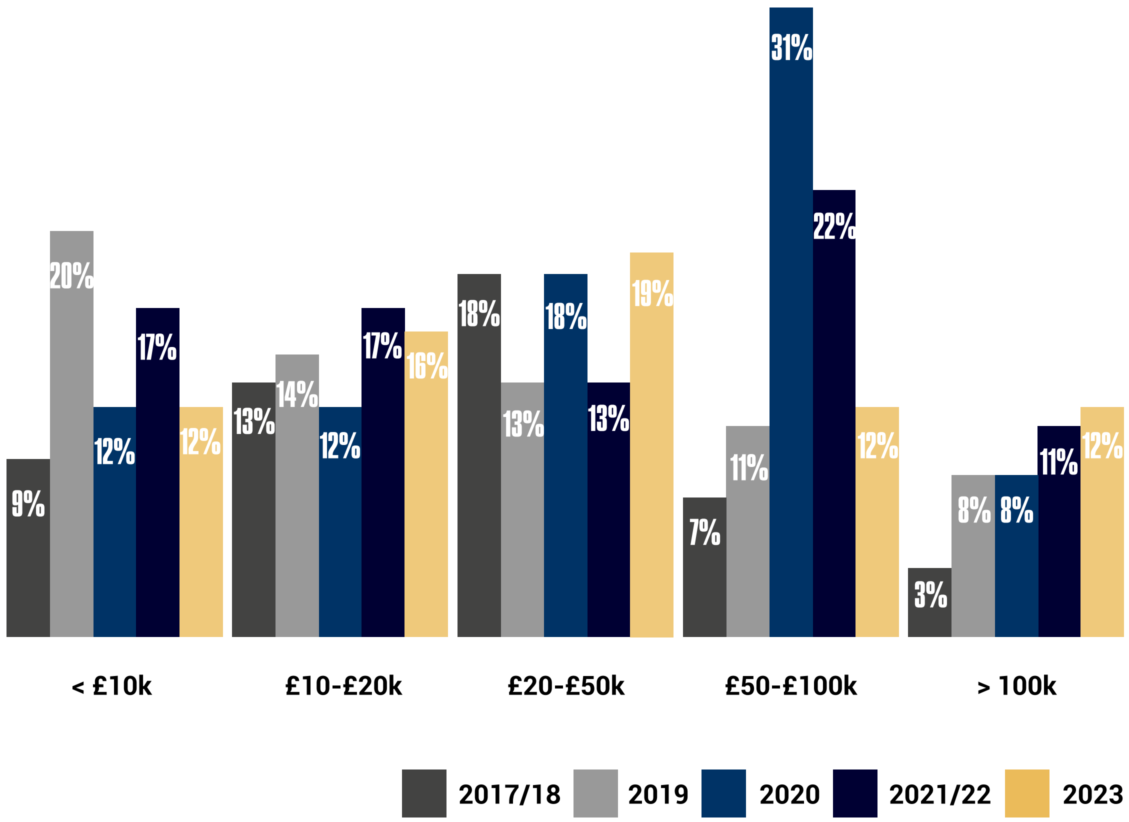

## FINANCING A DOCUMENTARY FILM

To get a better sense of **how many respondents had applied for funding for their documentary film, and to which funds they had applied (Q18)**, we provided respondents with an extensive list of documentary grant-givers. For the first time, applications to broadcasters were not the most common among our respondents. Doc Society, a fund for international, independent documentaries made, at least in part, by UK talent, was the most commonly selected choice with 34%. This may reflect a higher proportion of UK respondents, but it is notable that a single fund was more sought after than all broadcasters combined. US-based Sundance continues to be a popular choice internationally (32%), meanwhile, Whicker applicants make a smaller percentage than in previous years at 10%. One notable trend is that more than a quarter (27%) of respondents say they have never applied for any funding, up 7% from last year.

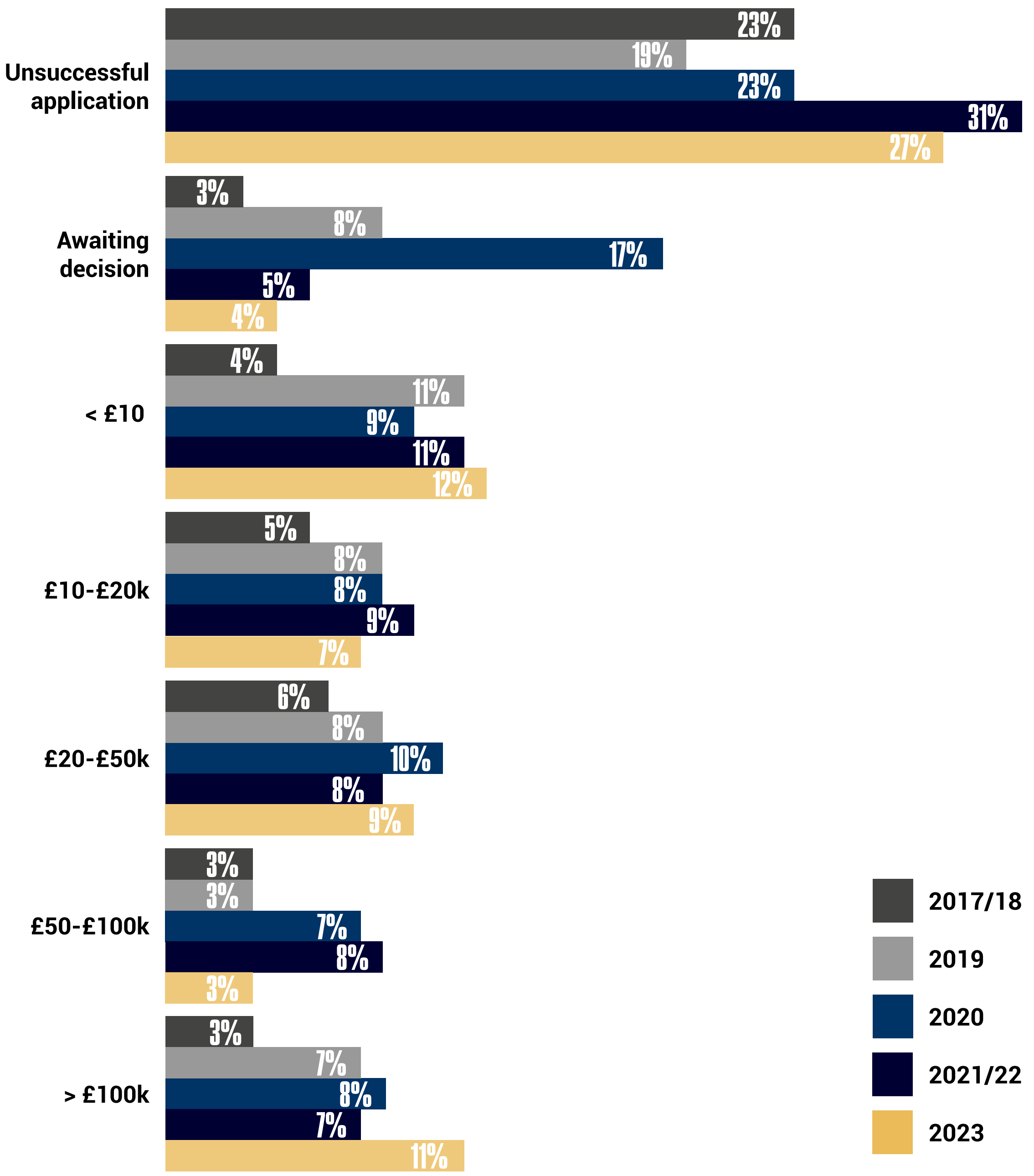
- 34% DOC SOCIETY
- 32% A BROADCASTER
- 32% SUNDANCE DOC FUND
- 28% CATAPULT FILM FUND
- 23% PRIVATE INVESTOR
- 16% IDFA BERTHA FUND
- 16% TRIBECA FILM INSTITUTE
- 16% JUSTFILMS/FORD FOUNDATION
- 12% CHICKEN & EGG ACCELERATOR LAB
- 11% INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION (IDA)
- 10% THE WHICKERS
- 9% CREATIVE EUROPE
- 9% HOTDOCS
- 8% IMPACT PARTNERS DEVELOPMENT FUND
- 7% CINEREACH
- 7% FORK FILMS
- 7% ONE WORLD MEDIA PRODUCTION FUND
- 5% DOHA FILM INSTITUTE
- 5% THE FLEDGLING FUND
- 4% BFI GLOBAL CINEMA FUND
- 4% CREATIVE SCOTLAND
- 3% WELLCOME INSTITUTE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FUND
- 1% THE FILMMAKER FUND
- 27% NEVER APPLIED FOR FUNDING

# AMOUNT OF FUNDING APPLIED FOR VS. AMOUNT RECEIVED

**For those respondents who answered that they had previously applied for funding for their documentary from an external source, we then ask them, on average, how much they had applied for (Q19).** The graph below details the differences in the amount requested by filmmakers in their funding applications. This year we have seen a decrease in films seeking less than £10,000 – from 17% to 12%, which implies that these small amounts are no longer making the difference they once did. By contrast, the £20-50k range has gone up from 13% to 19%. The proportion of filmmakers seeking £100k or more remains stable, from 11% to 12%, indicating that the Whicker Film & TV Award of £100k continues to be a substantial amount which can help even the most ambitious filmmakers bring their projects to fruition.



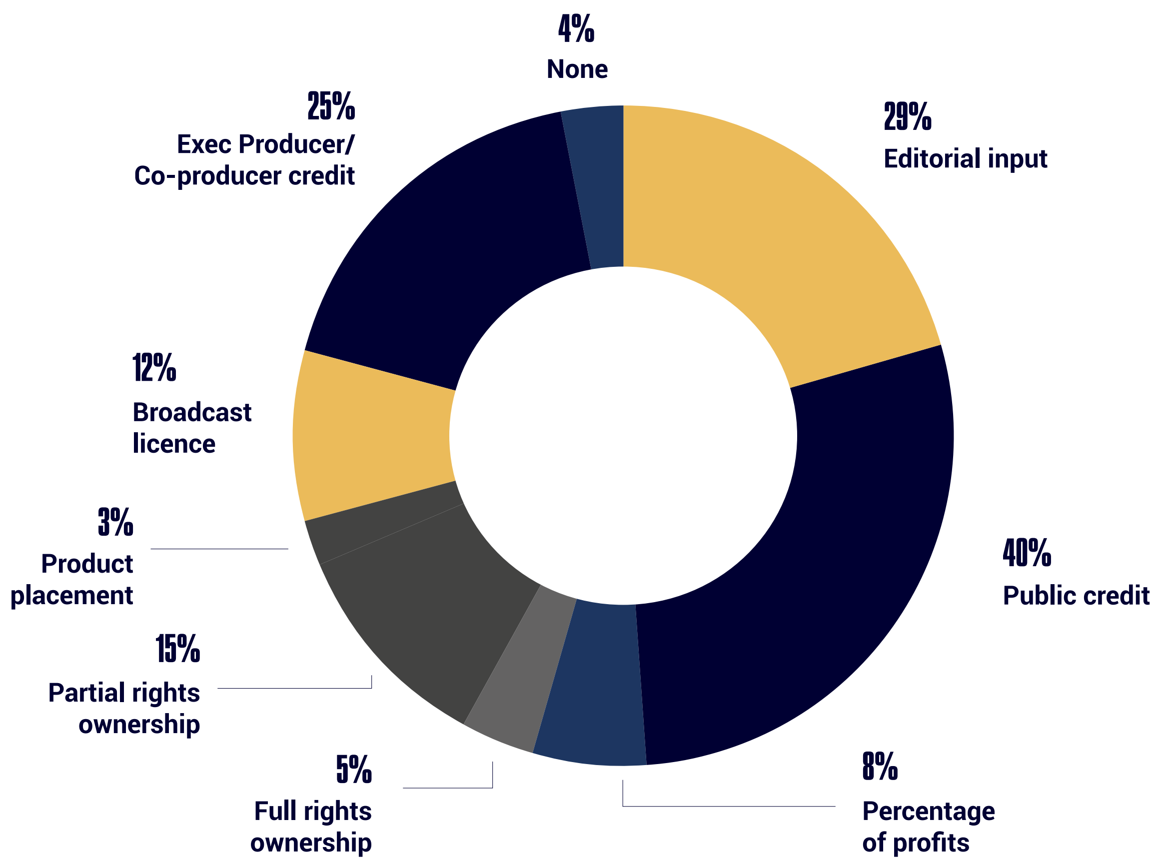

**The logical follow-up question then asked respondents how much funding they had received, if any (Q20).** The graph below highlights the gap between those whose applications garnered significant funding of more than £100K (which has risen to 11%) and those who received nothing at all. The number of failed funding applications is smaller this year. The figure dropped to 27% but the most common amount received remains less than £10,000, despite the fact that rising costs means that these amounts do not go as far as they did in other years.



> “I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A COMMITMENT TO GIVING FEEDBACK FROM APPLICATIONS (THIS IS PRETTY MUCH NON-EXISTENT AND SOMETIMES YOU DON’T EVEN RECEIVE AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT). THIS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE GROWING SENSE OF ISOLATION DOCUMENTARY MAKERS CAN FEEL, AND ALSO ADDS TO THE MYSTERY OF WHO GETS FUNDING AND HOW.”

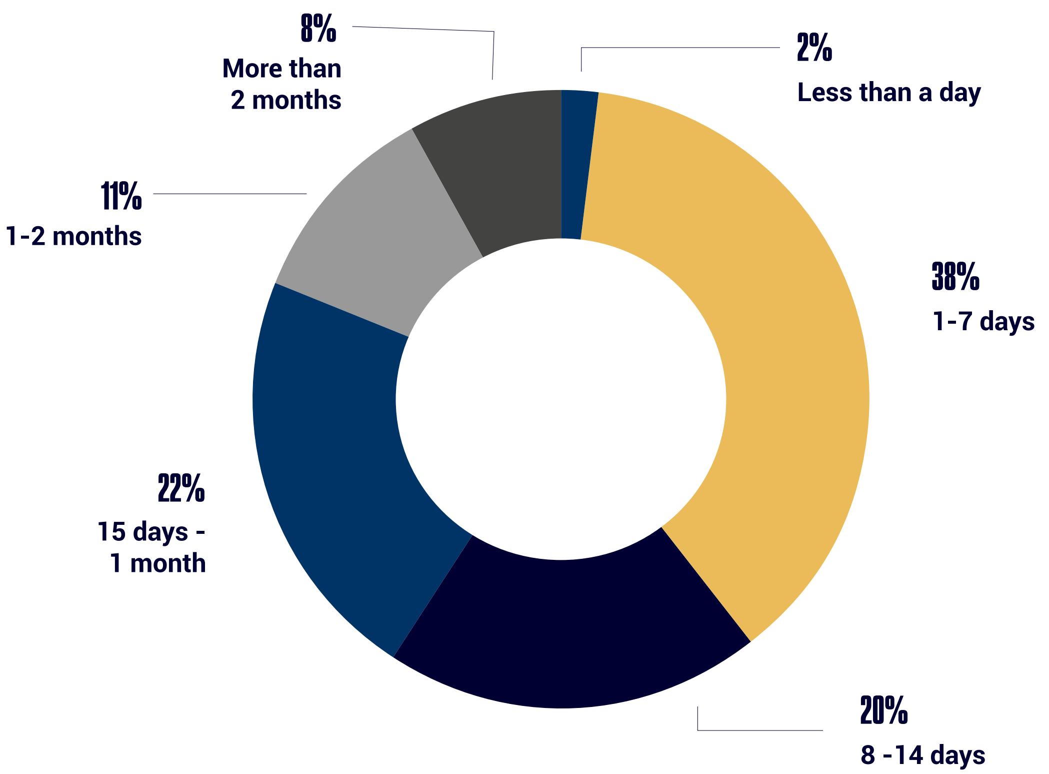
## EXPECTATIONS OF FUNDERS

**For those who had previously been awarded funding for their documentaries, we wanted to ascertain the expectations of their funders (Q21).** For the first time we are seeing a rise in funders who insist on a share of ownership rights in return for financial aid. In 2019 this was a mere 1% of all deals. Now it stands at 29%. Aside from this the picture remains pretty static with 40% of respondents answering that the funder expected to be publicly credited for their support. These ‘bragging rights" are the most common request. However there has also been a slight, 4%, increase in the requirement for editorial input throughout the filmmaking process. This has increased from 25% last year. The figures suggest that funders are requiring more from documentary makers than in previous years and opportunities for long-term profit have diminished.



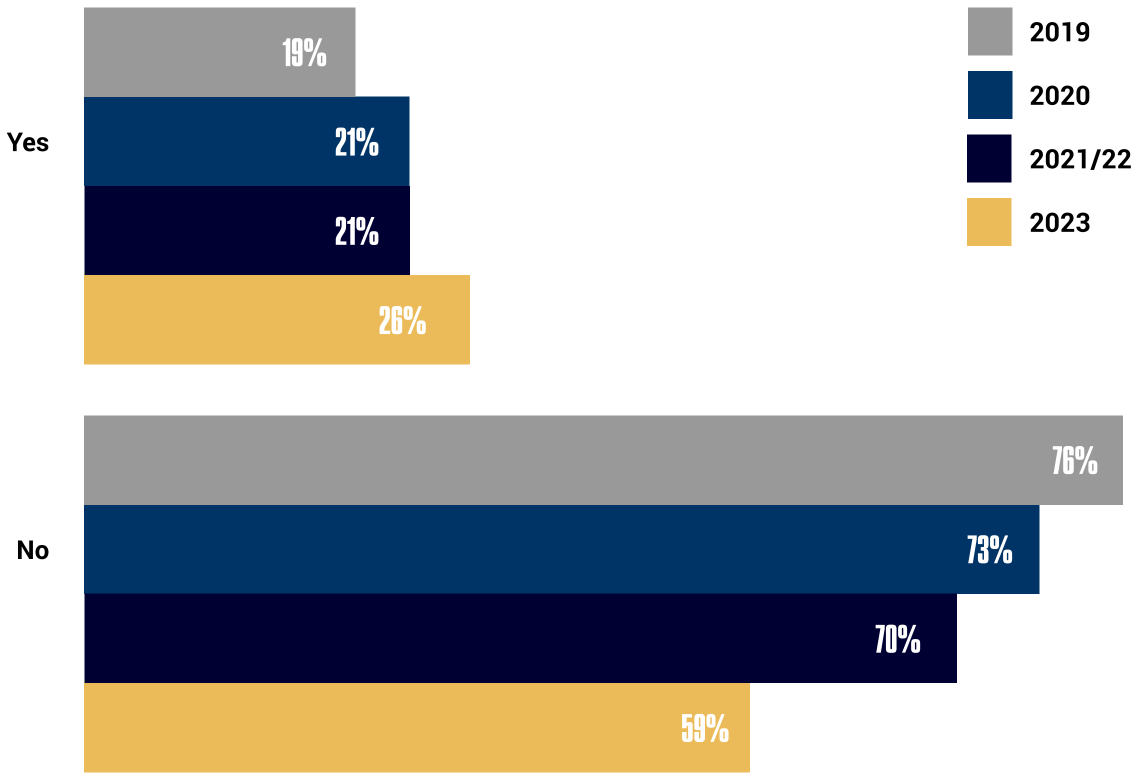
## APPLYING FOR FUNDING

Given that we have already shown that more than a quarter of funding applications fail, **we sought to discover how much time is invested in each application (Q30)**. The results closely mirror what we found last year, with the most common response being 1-7 days. The vast majority take less than a month, but only a small number of applications are at the extreme ends – less than a day or more than 2 months.




## CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding has long been seen as a democratic but also very time-consuming alternative source of funding. **We therefore ask respondents whether or not they had used a crowdfunding platform to raise funds for their previous projects (Q31)**. The headline here is that this year saw the highest proportion of respondents saying they had tried crowdfunding – over a quarter for the first time (26%). This is strikingly similar to the proportion (27%) who were unsuccessful in applications to traditional funders. On average, those who did use crowdfunding were able to raise 20% of the budget through this method. However, there is a big variance, with many raising next to nothing through crowdfunding, whilst a couple of filmmakers were able to fully fund their entire projects this way.



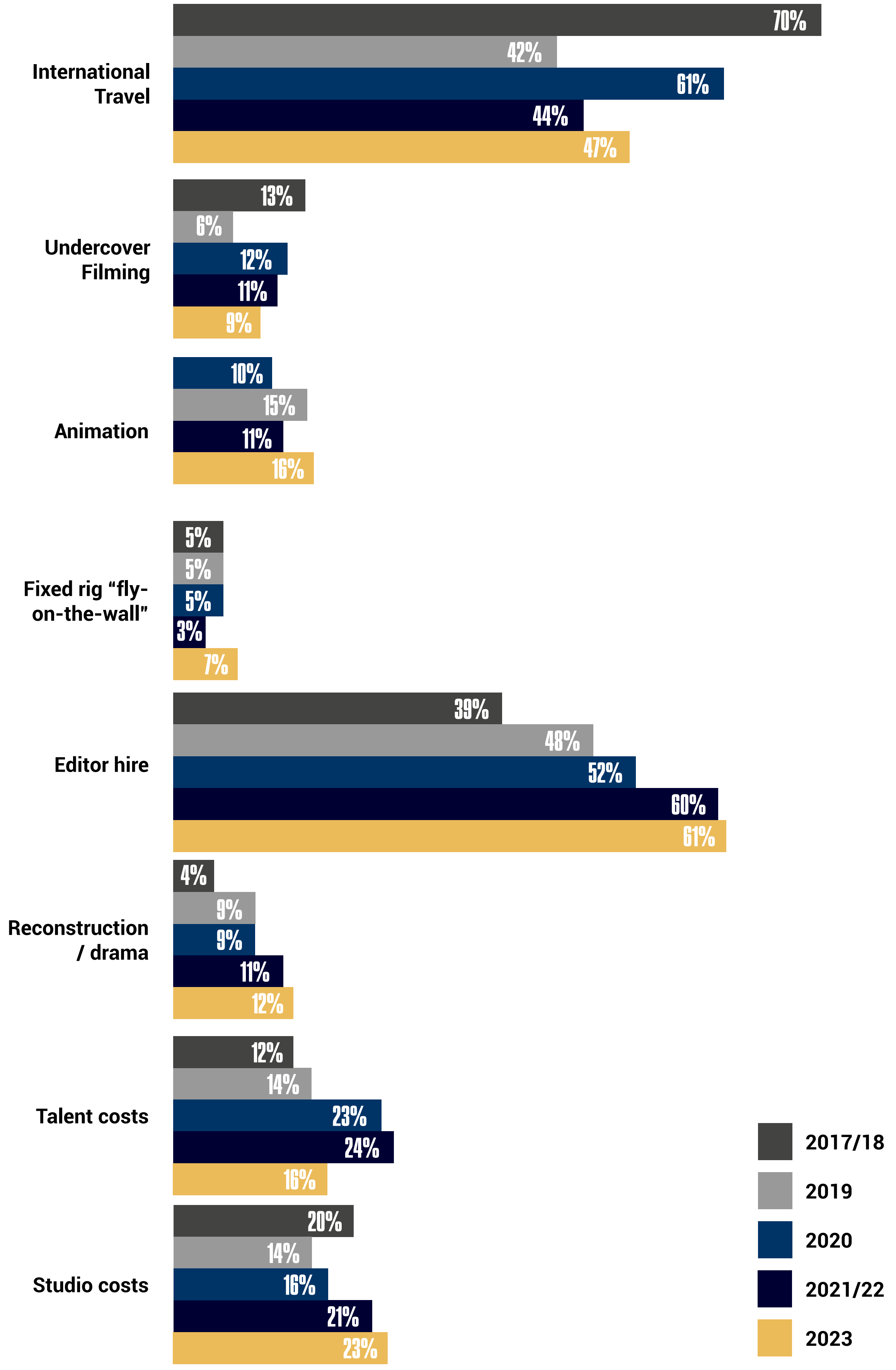
# FACTORS AFFECTING COST

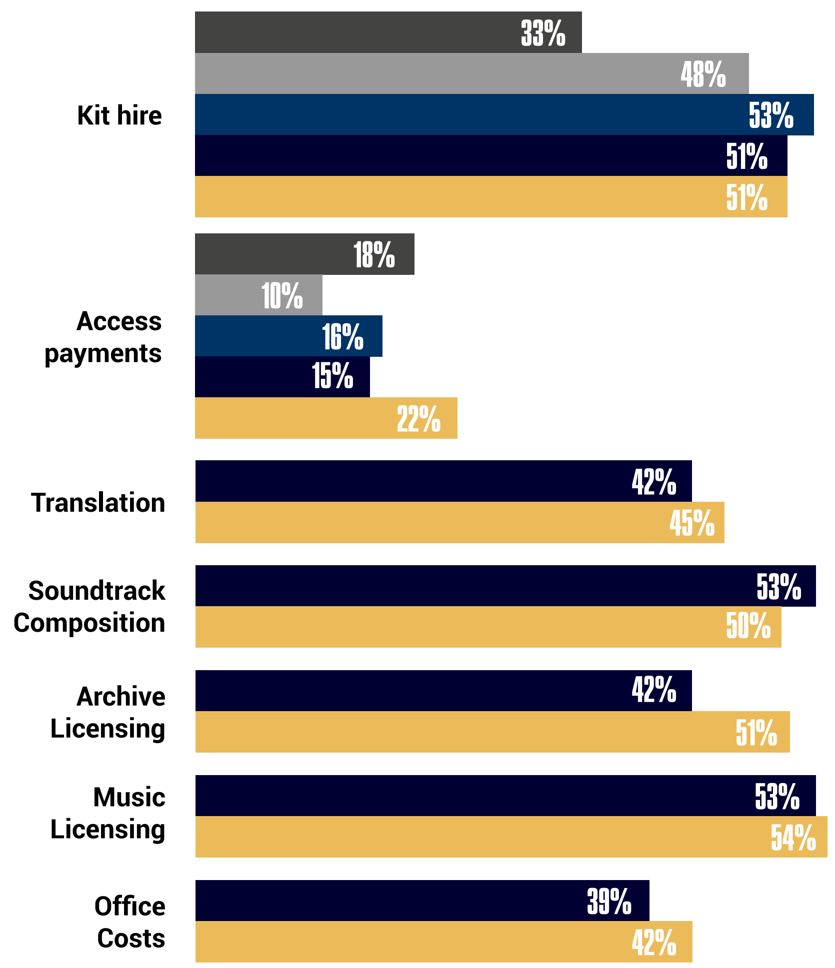
Since our first Cost of Docs survey in 2016, we have **tracked the most significant spending areas for documentary production (Q41)**. One major area which documentary makers have cut back on appears to be international travel. This year just 47% of respondents reported that their last documentary involved this element, which was as high as 70% in 2018. Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic seems to have had an impact in recent years, it may be the case that, in many parts of the world, emerging documentary makers are telling local stories with local crews.

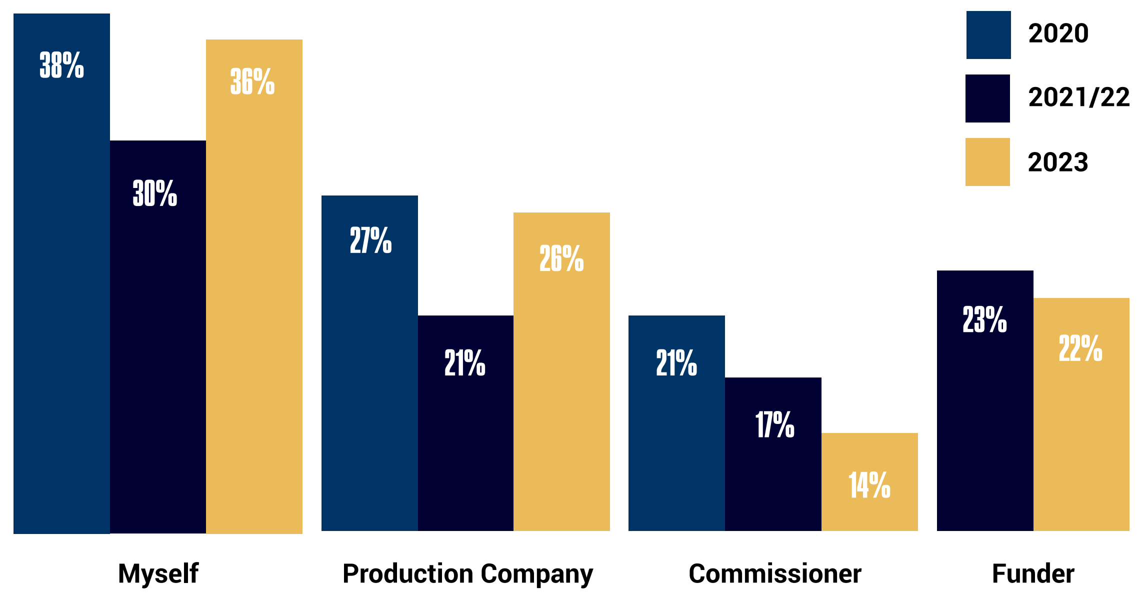
The most common cost this year was editor hire, which is now at 61%, having steadily risen from 39% in 2018. Archive licensing was required in a majority of documentaries (51%) for the first time. Meanwhile, it seems that talent costs are an area where documentary makers have been making savings, with just 16% of docs requiring them this year compared to 24% last year.

Interestingly, and perhaps counter-intuitively, two story telling techniques that are traditionally deemed to be very expensive, namely animation (16%) and reconstruction/drama (12%) are being used more this year than ever before.

(See data on page 33).





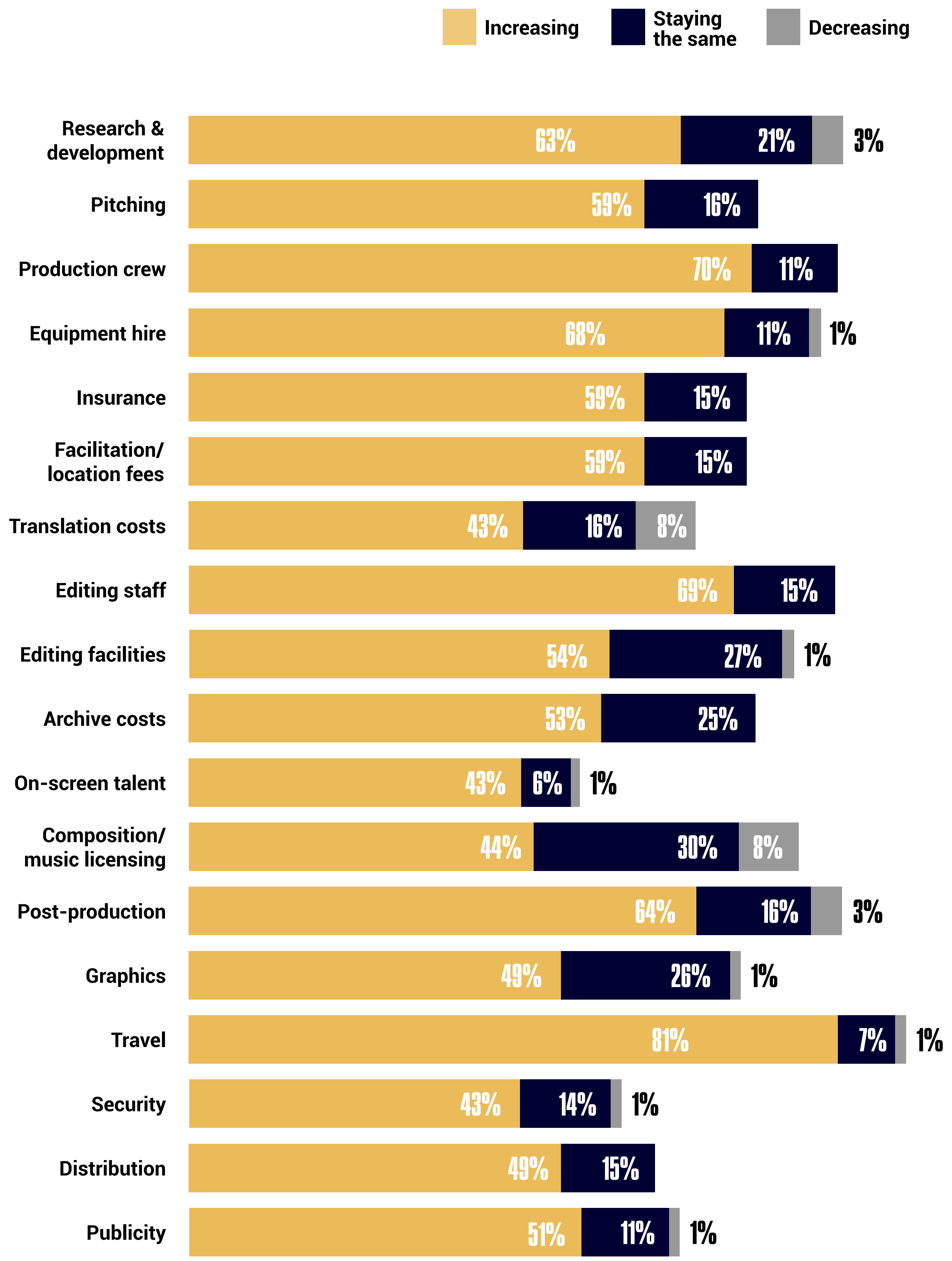

Next, **we asked respondents who had paid for the majority of elements in the previous section (Q42).** 36% of respondents answered that they had paid for the most significant spending areas for documentary production themselves, in comparison to 30% last year.
At the same time, it appears commissioners and funders are bearing less of the burden with slight drops to 14% and 22% respectively. One respondent breaks down the payments on their film:

*"I paid for the international travel, lodging, film permits, kit rental and other expenses. Archival film footage was donated but I had to get License Agreements from about 5 people--which was extremely time-consuming--it took several months."*

## INCREASING & DECREASING EXPENSES

**We also asked respondents to estimate which budget items cost them more year on year, which stayed the same and which were cheaper (Q47).** Across all 18 budget areas asked about, there was a clear consensus that costs are rising in every category, and soaring in many. The most dramatic increase in costs (and helpful in explaining the earlier results to question 41) appears to be in travel. 81% of respondents said this was increasing, 7% said it was staying the same and just 1% said that it was decreasing. The cost of hired labour also appears to have shot up, with 70% saying that the cost of filming crew had gone up and 69% saying the same for editing staff – no respondent said that costs had gone down in either of these categories. Other dramatic rises can be seen in equipment hire (68%), postproduction (64%) and research & development (63%).

The area with the highest proportion saying costs had fallen was translation, but even then, only 8% said that had decreased compared to 43% saying it increased. The only areas where costs were, for some, 'around the same' as last year were music licensing (30%), editing facilities (27%) and graphics (26%).




# COST CUTTING

**We wanted to find out what elements, if any, respondents had cut back on in order to reduce the cost of their docs (Q48)**. The responses were varied and reflect the challenges documentary makers face in trying to make ends meet. The most common cost-cutting methods were reductions in crew and cutting filming days. Travel and postproduction were key areas where savings were also found. By far the most common responses were that "everything" had to be cut and "paying myself" was a luxury they could not afford. Respondents describe cutting meals or getting into heavy debt in order to carry on with their documentary making. A handful of respondents said that they did not have to cut back in order to reduce costs on their latest documentary but the verbatim quotes below represent the most common responses across the survey sample:

**"Everything is considerably more expensive, but budgets from funders and broadcasters are flat. So the quality and scope of what can be achieved suffers."**

**"We cut back kit hire and hiring experienced crew and worked with new talent, which was good. But obviously we also made a lot of mistakes and had technical problems."**

**"Everything has to be precisely justified, there's no margin for error."**

**"Filming equipment and graphics and archive."**

**"Paying myself!"**

**"Shooting days and post-production days."**

**"Generally doing as much of the work myself as possible (e.g. assembly editing)"**

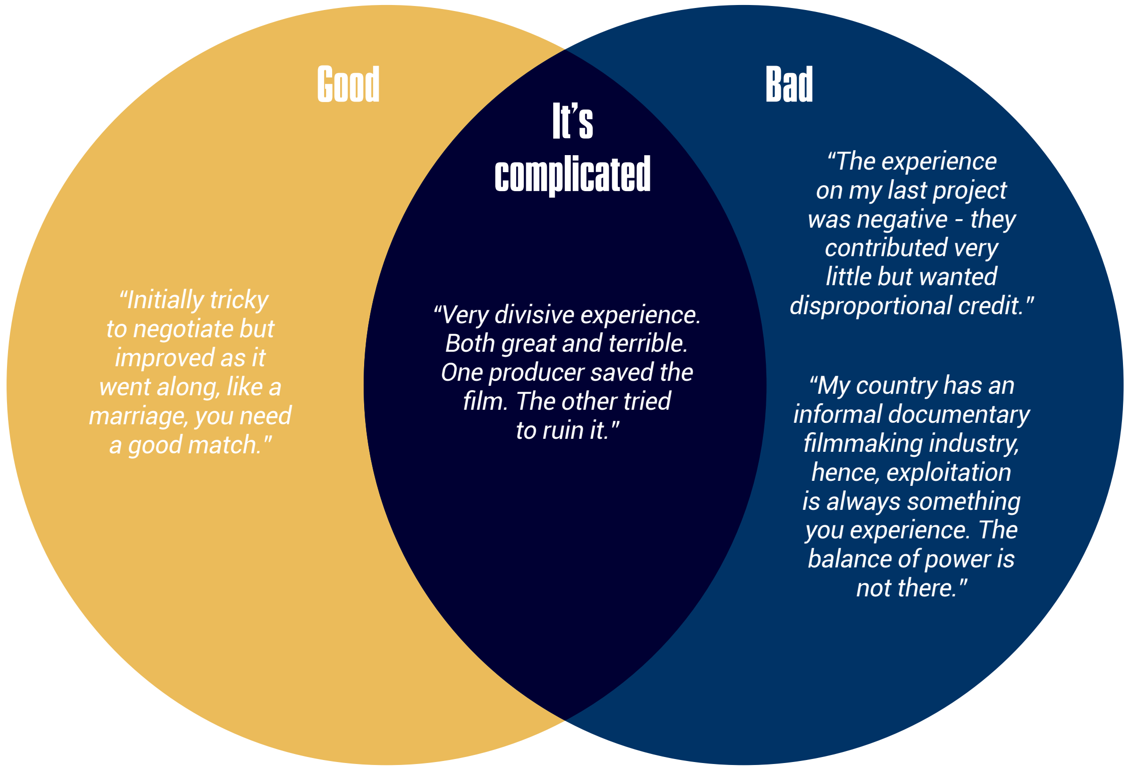
**"Transcription services, archival footage."**

**"Everything. Worked multiple roles myself unpaid."**

**"Move from proper postproduction studio to home office."**

# CO-PRODUCERS

New documentary makers are often encouraged by commissioners and mentors to team up with more experienced co-producers who will provide them with ready finance, credibility and market access in return for a share of any profit and, usually, editorial input. Having multiple co-producers on one documentary is very common nowadays, but **how workable and beneficial are relationships with co-producers (Q33)**? This year 36% of respondents had previously worked with a co-producer, a figure that was 10% higher in 2020. The comments we received highlighted the fact that these relationships can be hit-and-miss, with a wide array of perspectives about how beneficial they are. Here is a representative sample.



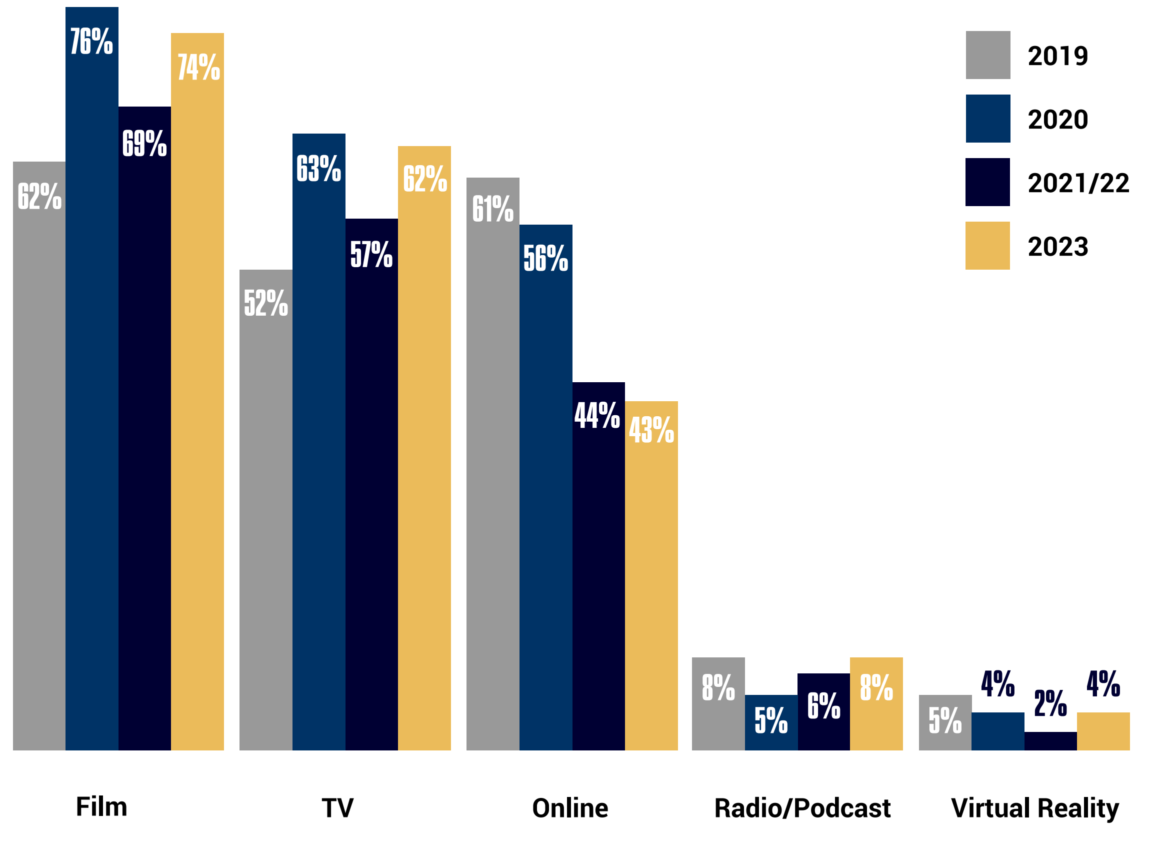
“IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY POSSIBLE EXPENSE IMAGINABLE IS OFF-LOADED TO INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS.”

# THE MARKET

## DOCUMENTARY MEDIUM

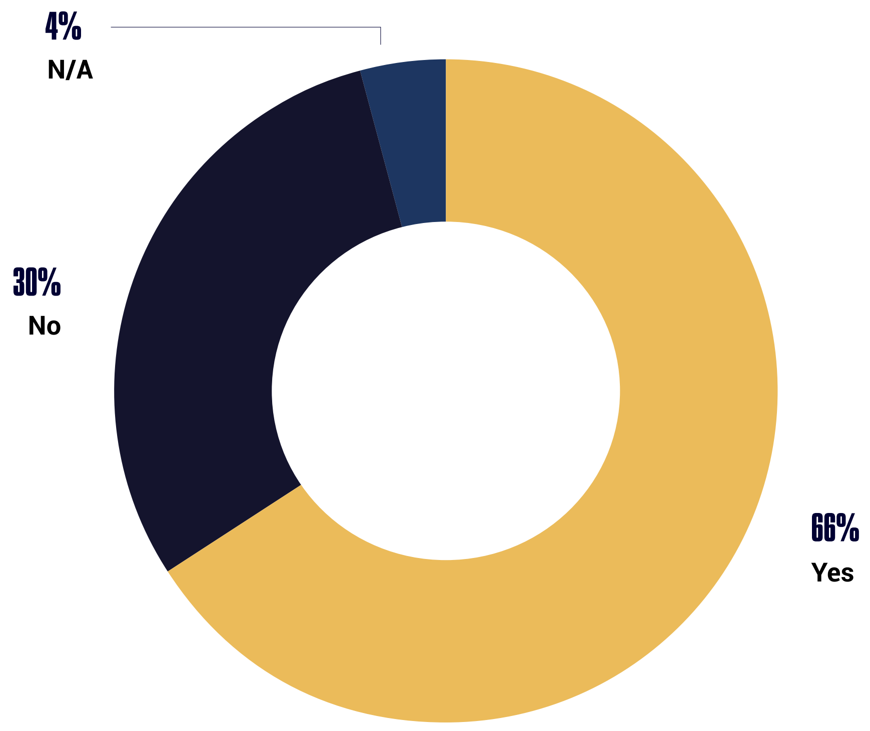
As in previous surveys, **we asked respondents for which medium they made documentaries (Q5)**. Respondents were invited to tick all that applied and the results show that documentaries are increasingly made for more than one medium.

74% responded that they make documentaries primarily for film release, whilst 62% said the same for television broadcast. This survey also saw higher numbers who selected virtual reality (4%), as well as radio/podcasts (8%). Other answers included museum exhibitions and educational use. Interestingly ‘online’ continues to drop from its high of 61% in 2019 to 43% this year. Streaming services may have been heralded as the end of film and TV, but we see no evidence of this yet.



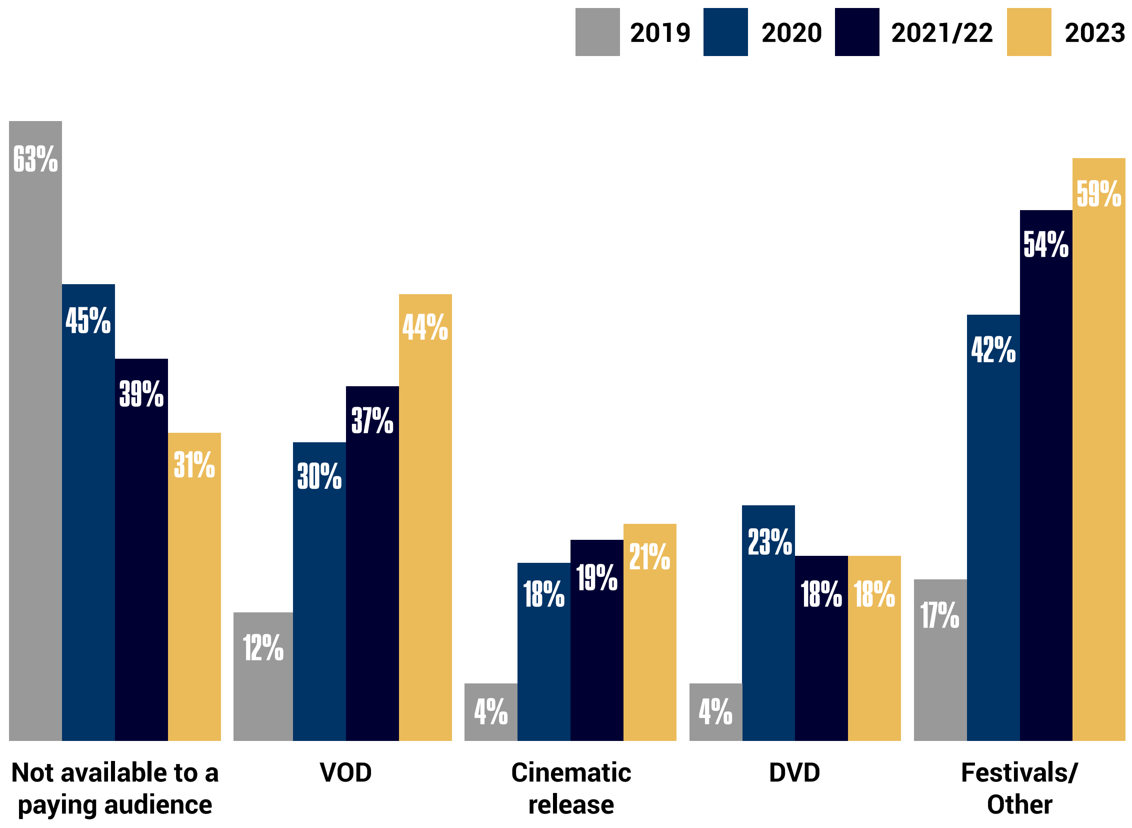
# HAS YOUR DOCUMENTARY BEEN BROADCAST?

The survey also asked **respondents if the last documentary they had worked on had been broadcast (Q39)**. Two-thirds answered that it had, whilst 30% said it hadn't. These were similar proportions to previous surveys. Among the broadcasters cited, the BBC was by far the most mentioned (16 times). BBC Storyville was mentioned multiple times, highlighting the importance of that strand in enabling the wider public to access quality documentaries. PBS was the second most referenced (8 times), showing the key role of the American public service broadcaster despite there being many players with much deeper pockets in the US TV market. Others who were cited multiple times include Arte, CBC, HBO, Channel 4, Discovery, National Geographic and Netflix.




# HAS YOUR DOCUMENTARY FOUND AN AUDIENCE?

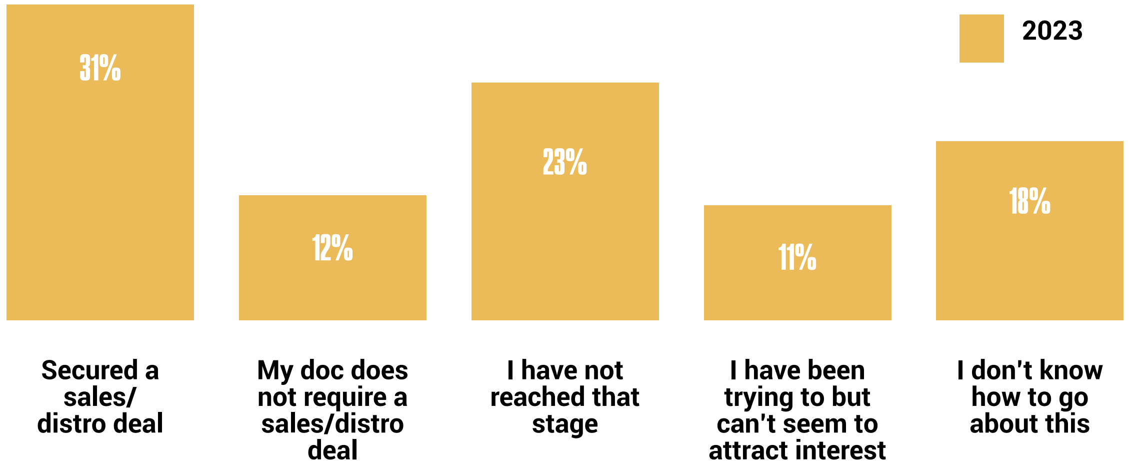
**The follow-up question asked respondents whether a documentary they had worked on had been shown to a paying audience (Q40).** This is one of the truly bright spots in this year's survey. This year 31% responded 'no' – a significant decrease from 39% last year, 45% in 2020 and 63% in 2019. We therefore have a clear upward trajectory showing that more and more documentaries are finding a paying audience. There are also changes in the formats people are making their documentaries available in. For the first time, an equal proportion of respondents (44%) had their documentaries made available on a video on demand platform as those who had theirs screened at film festivals. Back in 2019, just 12% of documentaries were made available on VOD platforms. This appears to indicate that the explosion in this sector has enabled documentaries to reach much broader audiences without ending the practice of premiering films before a live audience. Cinematic releases have also risen dramatically, at 21% this year compared to just 4% in 2019. DVDs remain stable at 18%, suggesting that this format continues to have a market in an age where people own fewer physical copies of media.



NEW QUESTION

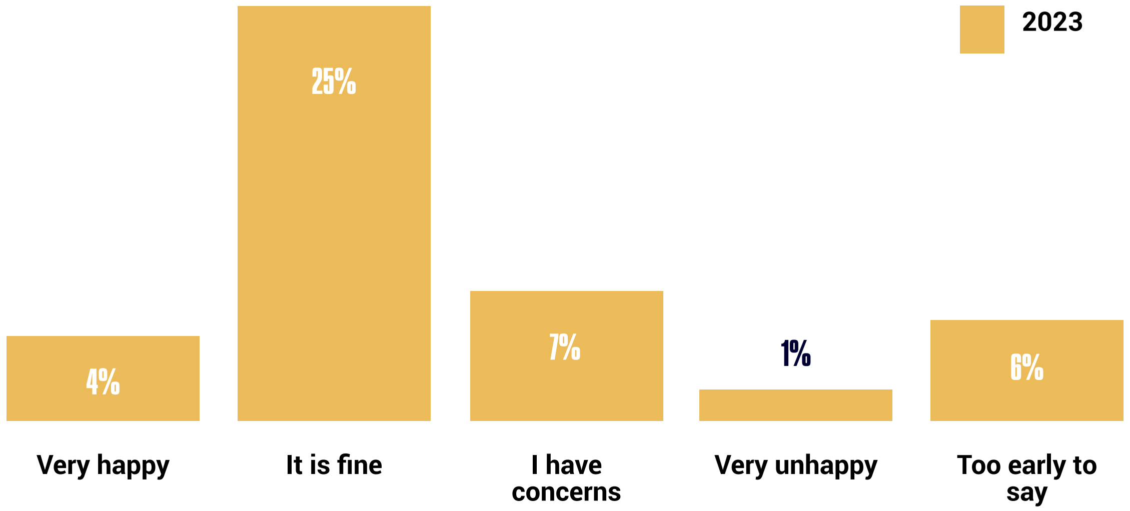
## SALES & DISTRIBUTION DEALS

This year we asked a new set of questions relating to sales/distribution deals. We first sought to find out **whether respondents had secured a sales/distribution deal and, if not, why not? (Q22)**. 31% had secured such a deal, but the reasons for those who hadn't were varied. The most common (23%) was that they had not yet reached that stage, but the reason cited by 18% was that they had not secured a deal because they did not know how to go about it. This seems to show a significant knowledge gap. Some of the respondents had their sales/distribution deal come about through a festival or market, such as Sheffield DocFest or IDFA. However, others solved their problem by "knocking on doors", working "with a sales agent" or making use of "longstanding personal relationships".




We also asked **whether respondents were intending to pay any money up front to the sales/distribution organisation (Q25)**. This is rare but it does happen. 4% say they were required to pay up front. When it comes to what sales and distribution agents take in return, the most common answer was a percentage of profits. These ranged from 10% up to 50%. Others said that agents were taking the "broadcast and digital licence" and, in one case, "the rights to the film for 5 years".

Of those who had deals in place, **we asked how satisfied the documentary makers were with these arrangements (Q27)**. Most feel that "it is fine". Some "have concerns" or feel that it's currently "too early to say", but few are either "very happy" or "very unhappy". One respondent said they were "Generally happy, but I would note that the distributor's minimum guarantee invested into the TV edit was not enough to pay myself properly after paying the rest of the crew."




More generally, we asked respondents **whether, in their last documentary, they found themselves being required to make payments to organisations which they had not foreseen (Q28)**. 19% responded that they did, whilst 72% did not. Among the unexpected payments were those for lawyers, music royalties, and (in certain countries) government associations such as film classification boards. One respondent answered:

*"I had to get a last-minute audio remix for a DCP for film festivals which cost almost twice what I had researched online. I did not realize that film festivals do not offer help with lodging or food… I could not afford closed captioning so my film was disqualified from consideration for a grant. It seems like every possible expense imaginable is off-loaded to independent filmmakers."*

# PITCHING

## HOW HELPFUL ARE PUBLIC PITCHES?

Since 2019, the Cost of Docs survey has **asked about the value of public pitches and forums (Q34)**. This year, 33% told us that they had participated in such pitches (down 6% from last year but the same as 2019). The pitches most referenced were those at Sheffield DocFest. Other pitching forums attended by our respondents include: Docs by the Sea, Durban Film Market, Hot Docs, Pitching du Réel, Dok Leipzig, IDFA, Sunny Side of the Doc, Edinburgh, DocsLisboa, East Doc Forum, Odesa IFF Industry Days, Guadalajara Film Festival and Kenya's Kalasha Film and TV Market. The experience of those who attended pitches fell roughly into three groups: those for whom participating in a public pitch made all the difference to their project; those who did not get concrete funding but can identify marginal benefits from their participation and those who felt that public pitches were a waste of time. Below is a selection of quotes.

Good:

**"We won the pitch grand prize: $25K USD. This provided the majority of our production funding."**

**"As a result, I received a commission from the BBC and was paired with a production company to get my documentary made."**

**"Pitches have been lifelines for my projects."**

Helpful in other ways:

**"I did not succeed in getting funding, however, feedback on the story helped in shaping and shooting the documentary well."**

**"It led to making good contacts."**

**"We created networks, I found a coproducer."**

**"It can bring momentum to a project that is at the right point in its life."**

Not so helpful:

**"The cost versus the benefit is skewed towards a huge time investment for uncertain gains."**

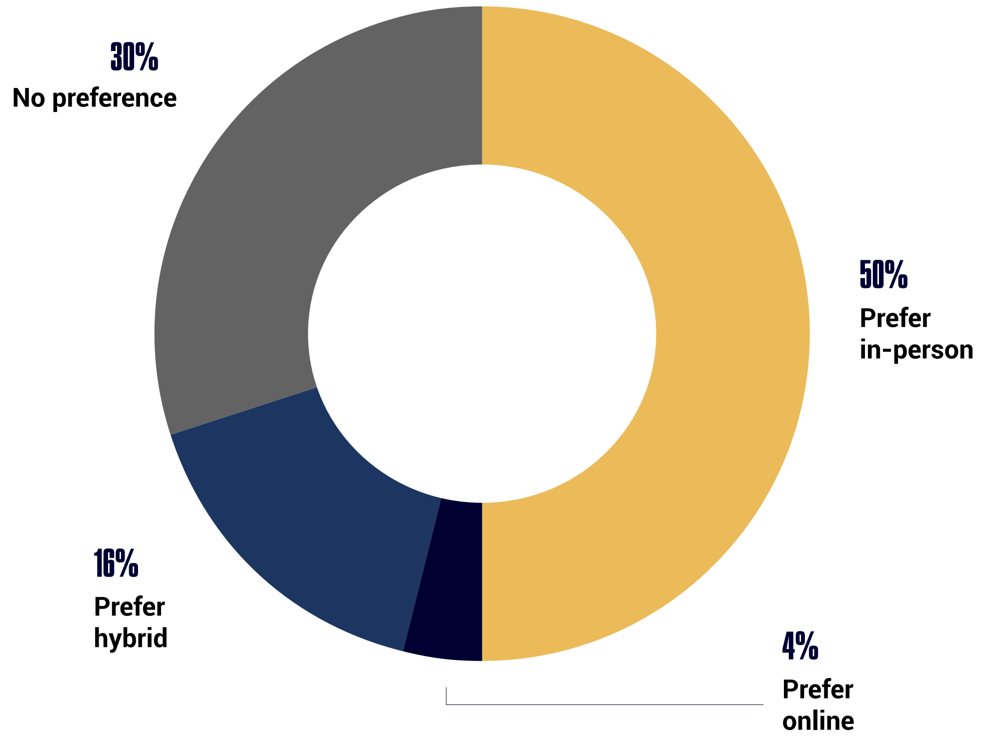
**"I was awarded 20,000 but I didn't know how to approach investors or distributors after the win. I am still working and finding funding to finish the film."**

**"The project was selected for a meeting with BBC Storyville as part of the pitch, but this was cancelled without further communication."**

**"It led to support on a number of occasions in the past, but commissioning editors now have far less power to decide than 10 years ago."**

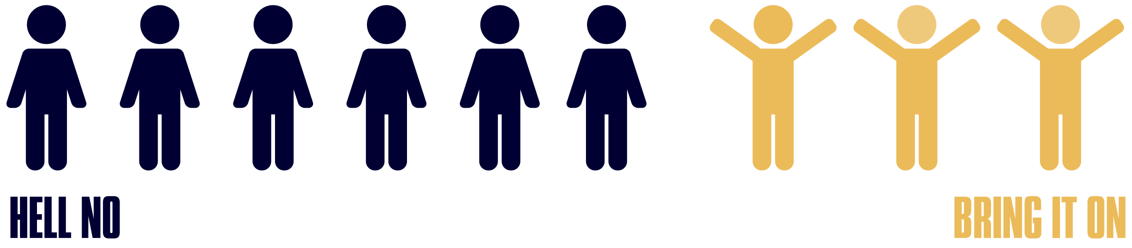
# VIRTUAL PITCHES & EVENTS

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many pitching forums and workshops have been hosted in an online space. **We asked our respondents if they have taken part in any virtual pitches or events (Q36)**. Only 31% said they had this year, compared to 44% last year. **We also asked about people's preference between in-person and online pitching forums (Q37)**. It appears that, as the world has re-opened following the pandemic, respondents are losing their love for virtual events. Last year 43% had said they preferred in-person, but this is now half of all respondents. The number who prefer online-only has dropped from 13% to 4% and hybrid has fallen from 25% to 16%.




**We also asked how likely, on a scale of 1-10, they were to recommend a move towards virtual pitching forums and events in the future**. This year the average answer was 3.9, compared to our previous two surveys when it was 4.3 and 5.7. This suggests that filmmakers have generally tired of pitching online and there is a renewed groundswell of support for in-person events. However there was some dissent, with one respondent saying: *"I would like to see more festivals remaining online and lowering the costs for participation. Hotdocs is $800: it's ridiculous."* Another agreed that online pitching means *"more opportunities made available to Africans."*

**On a scale of 1-10 how likely are you to recommend a move towards virtual pitching forums and events in the future (Q38)?**



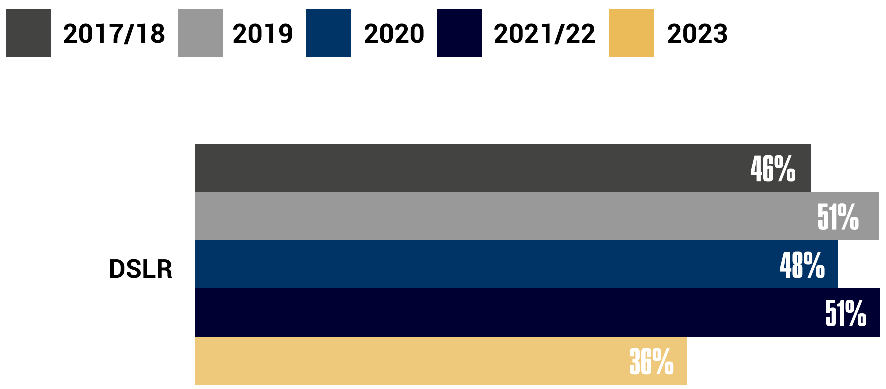
> “THE MAIN CHALLENGE IS THE HASSLE TO RAISE THE MONEY. THE CONSTANT REJECTION FROM FUNDERS TAKES ITS TOLL. I FEEL THAT THE INDUSTRY NEEDS TO BE SWITCHED AROUND. BROADCASTERS NEED US. HOW COME THEY AREN’T PITCHING TO US? HOW COME WE HAVE TO GO AROUND LIKE BEGGARS, WHEN THEY NEED OUR WORK TO SURVIVE AND THE SAME WITH FESTIVALS.”

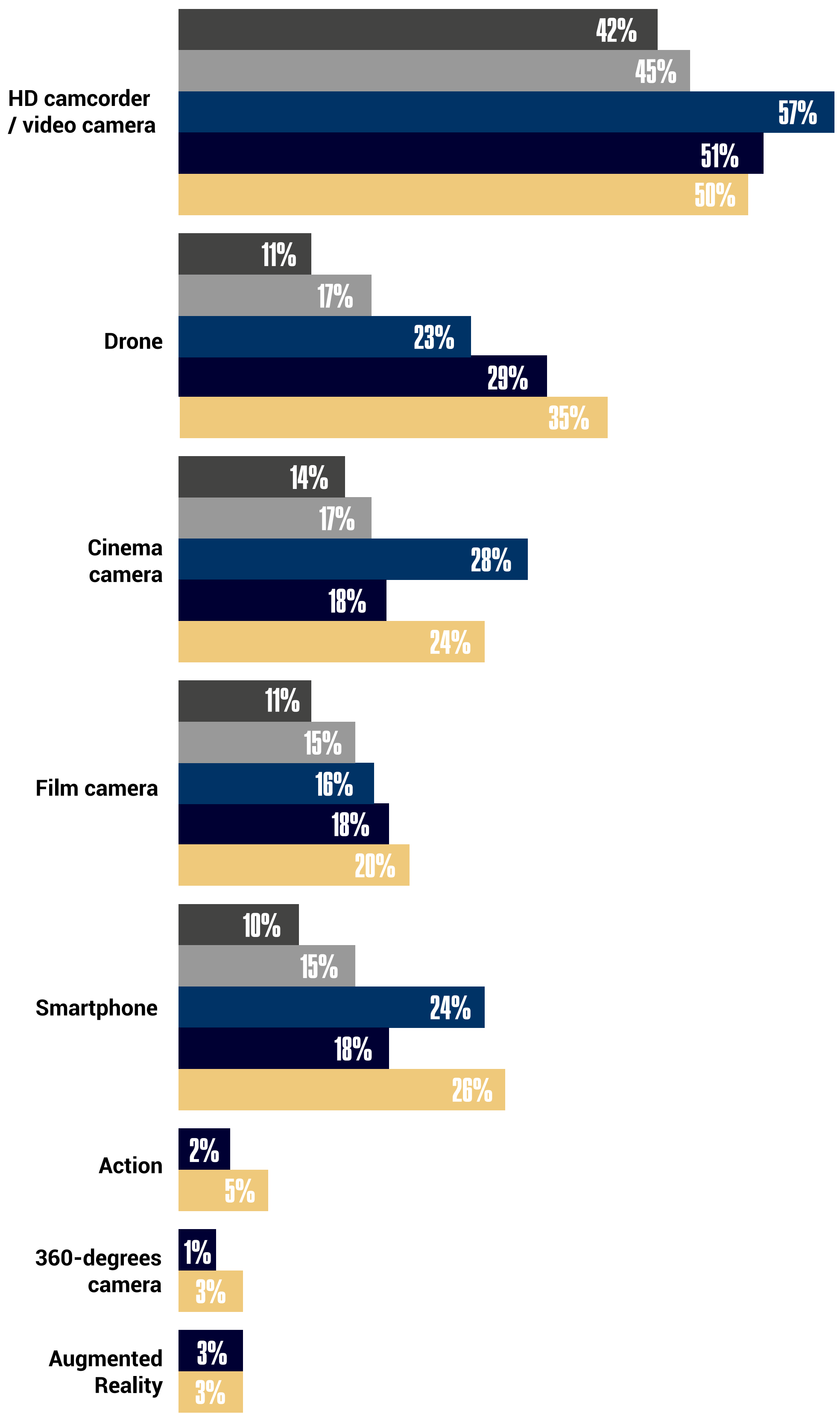
# EQUIPMENT

## CAMERAS

The Cost of Docs survey provides a good opportunity to discern current equipment trends. **We established what filming equipment our respondents used (Q43)**. This year, the camera of choice for half of documentary makers is the HD camcorder/High-quality video camera. Meanwhile the DSLR has now fallen in popularity to 36%, having always hovered around the 50% mark in the previous 4 surveys. The data reveals a steady rise in the use of drones: from 11% in 2017/18, they are now used by 35% of documentarians but as an adjunct to the main camera, not an alternative to it. Whilst 12 respondents cited the DSLR as the principal camera, none mentioned drones. (A documentary shot entirely by drone is an intriguing thought.)

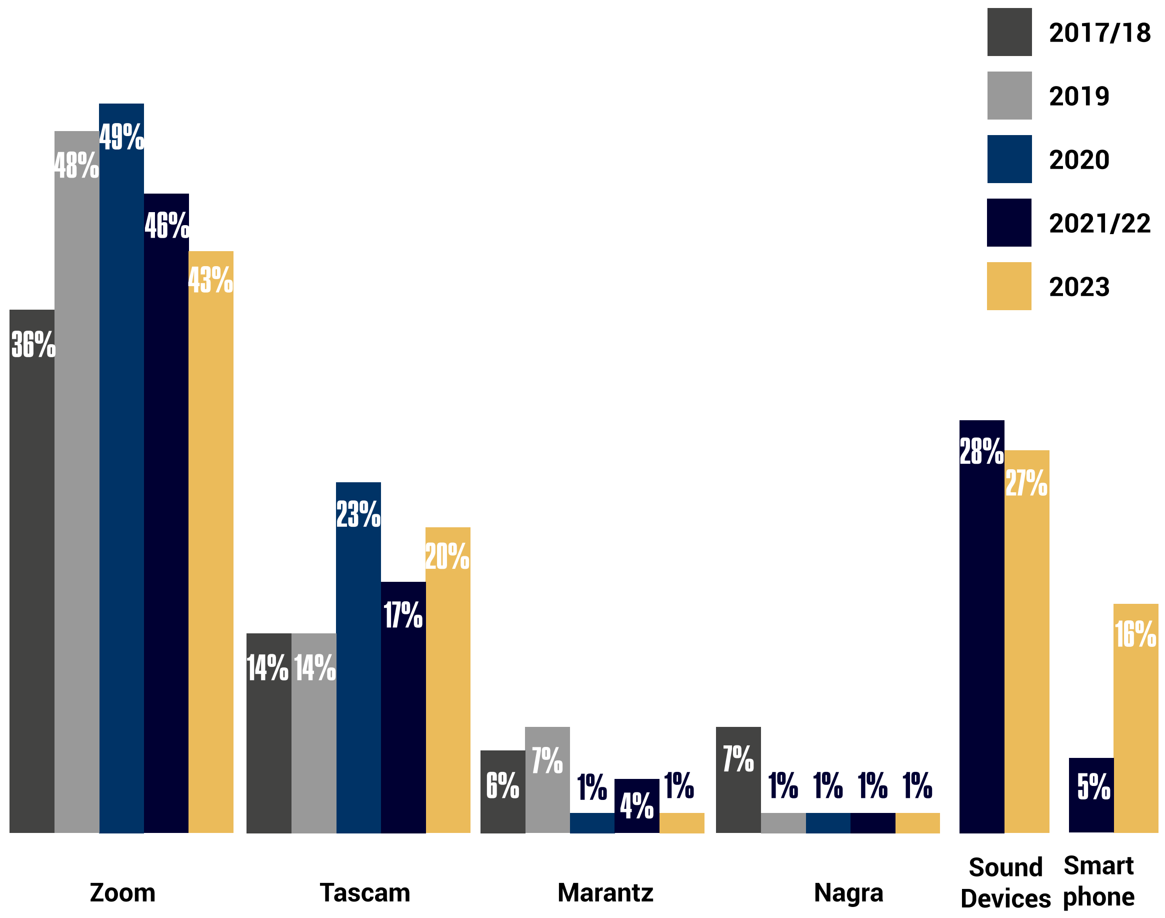
Another technological shift is the continued rise in the use of smartphones: from 10% when we first asked to 26% now. As smartphone cameras have improved, relative costs have dropped and a substantial proportion of the world's population uses them to document their lives, it is not surprising to see this rise. However, what one might not have predicted is the steady year-on-year rise of high-end film cameras, from 11% five years ago to 20% now. It seems that new technology is not replacing the old so much as providing more options.





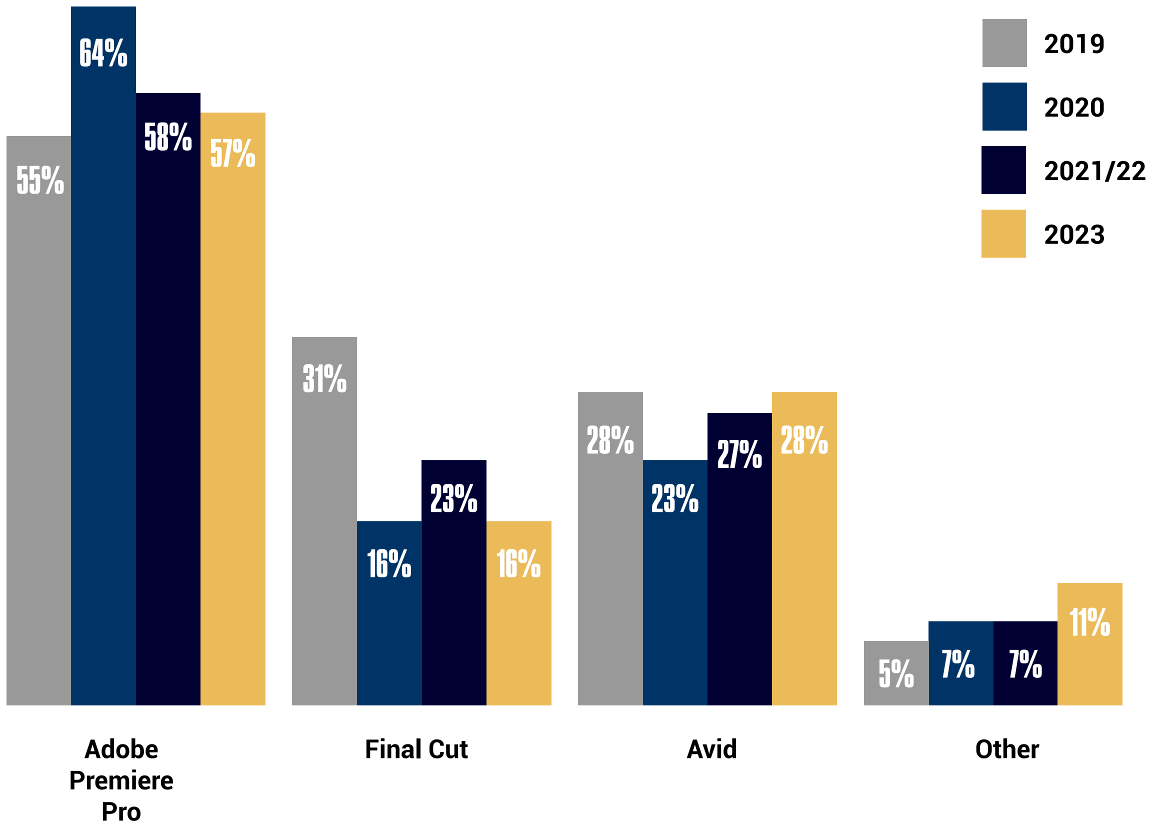

# AUDIO

In addition to the cameras used by documentary makers in the production of their work, **we were also interested to know more about the audio equipment they use (Q45)**. The most popular choice for the 5th time in a row is the small and portable Zoom recorder, used this year by 43% of respondents. The second most popular choice in this year's survey was the very high spec, but bulkier and more expensive Sound Devices (27%), reflecting a similar proportion to last year. Meanwhile, use of the more affordable Tascam has risen to 20%, whilst smartphones have shot up from 4% to 16%, again suggesting that respondents are opting for cheaper and more accessible equipment. This year we added the option to select the Rode reporter app, which 4% of respondents selected as their main audio device.



# EDITING SOFTWARE

Finally, **we asked respondents to select which editing software they used (Q46)**. Yet again Adobe Premiere Pro was the choice of the majority, with 57% of respondents selecting this option. This has remained stable over the last four surveys. Avid continues to be its closest contender at 28%, but use of Final Cut Pro has dropped significantly – it is now the choice of just 16% of documentary makers having been at 31% back in 2019. One option which we added this year because several had mentioned it last year is Davinci Resolve. At 11%, the free Davinci Resolve offers cash-strapped documentary makers editing software which can compete with its well-established competitors. Given that editing is an area where respondents say costs have risen, it is perhaps not surprising to see cheaper options rise in popularity.



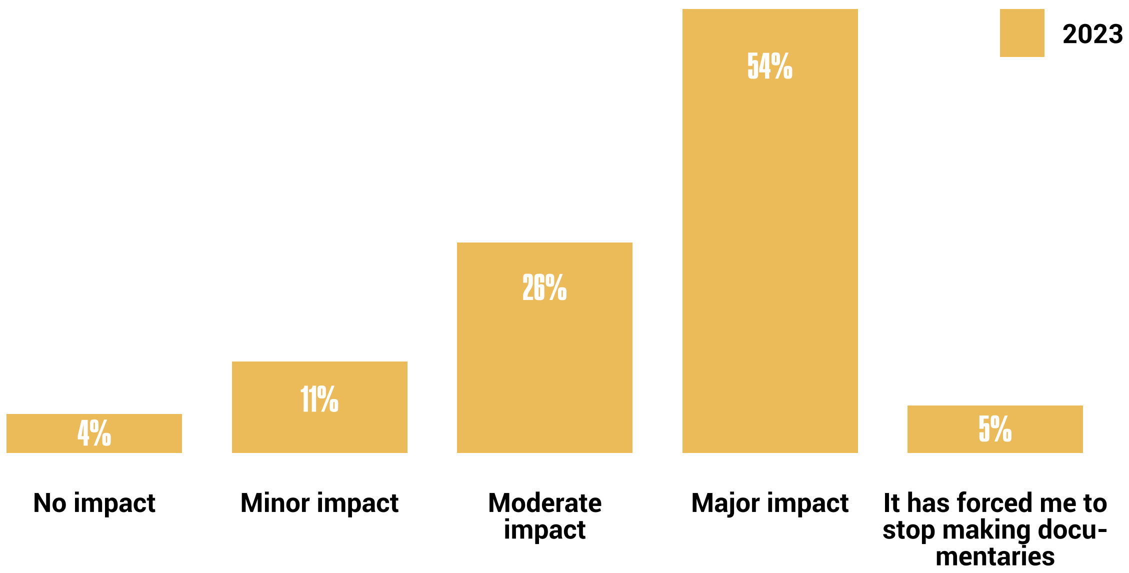

NEW QUESTION

# THE TOLL ON DOC MAKERS

## COST OF LIVING

**This year, for the first time, we asked to what extent the rising cost of living has impacted respondents' ability to make documentaries (Q49).** The answers paint a stark picture, with 54% saying it has had a major impact and a further 5% saying it has already forced them to stop making documentaries. Only 4% say it has had 'no impact', whilst 11% describe the impact as 'minor'.

The Cost of Docs Survey aims to track events that could affect the livelihoods of independent documentary makers. Although it is difficult to make like-for-like comparisons, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis appears to be creating more anxiety than either COVID-19 or Brexit (the UK's departure from the European Union in January 2020). In our last survey for example, 16% of documentary makers said Brexit was having a 'much bigger impact than expected' whilst 26% said that the pandemic had a 'massive impact which threatened their future as documentary makers'. Both figures are a lot less than 54%.



Here are some verbatim comments on the subject:

"I am so fixated on finding paid employment that I can't focus on my own work."

"Eventually (it) made me stop doing documentary to study a BSc in public administration to have a secure job."

"The general economy is a bummer. I lost a client that was providing me with a stable income and so I'm having to rethink some of my choices for an ambitious doc I've been working on."

"I can still make films because of support from many organisations and keeping my cost of living very low; otherwise, the impact would be major."

"Increase in general living expenses (particularly rent, food and bills) makes money tighter, however this has been negated by receiving festival prize money which has been the biggest factor in my ability to continue making documentaries. "

"I have incurred significant debt in order to work on my documentary and taken a huge hit in income in order to have the time to work on the project. This has been debilitating at times and I have seriously considered a career change on many occasions."

"Documentary filmmaking is not sustainable in my opinion."

"It has taken me 35 years to become good at making documentaries and now I can't afford to make them anymore."

"Currently considering if it's viable to continue or quit."

"If I can't find a way to even cover the cost of making a documentary, let alone earn a living wage, I will have to get a job doing something else--which would be a shame--because right now, these films I am doing are very timely, important, and needed because they relate to climate change."

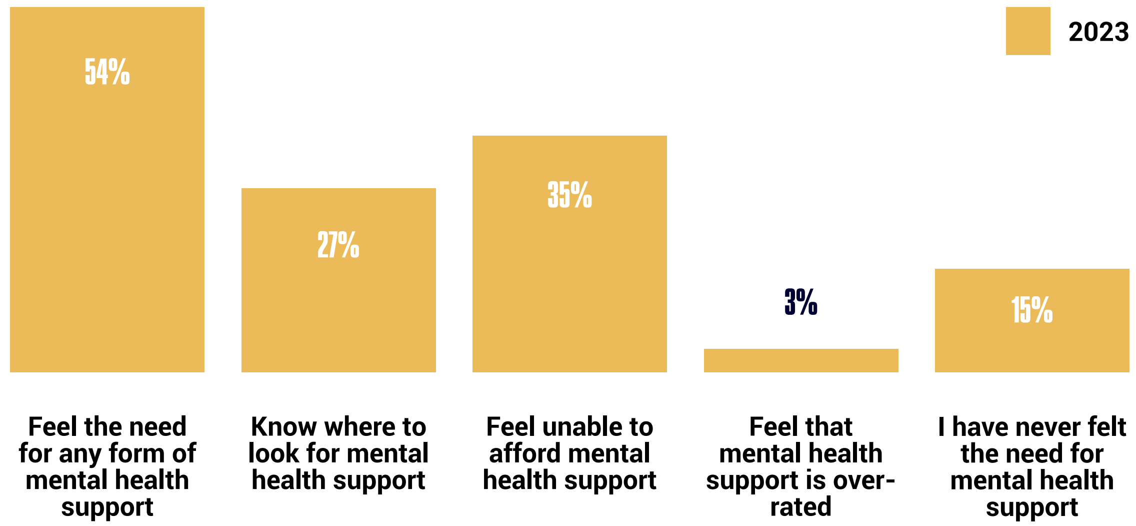


NEW QUESTION

# MENTAL HEALTH

**We also asked respondents this year about the emotional toll of documentary making and its impact on their mental health (Q50)**. This question yielded data about an aspect of working in this industry which, until recently, has been seldom aired.

54% of respondents said that, during their last documentary, they felt the need for mental health support. However, just 27% knew where to look for such support and, perhaps most troubling, 35% felt unable to afford the mental health support they needed. However, the verbatim comments revealed some areas of good practice and those who think doc makers protest too much.




Here is a representative sample of comments:

"We had mental health supervision available for all crew and participants."

"We need mental health supervision as a widely adopted practice."

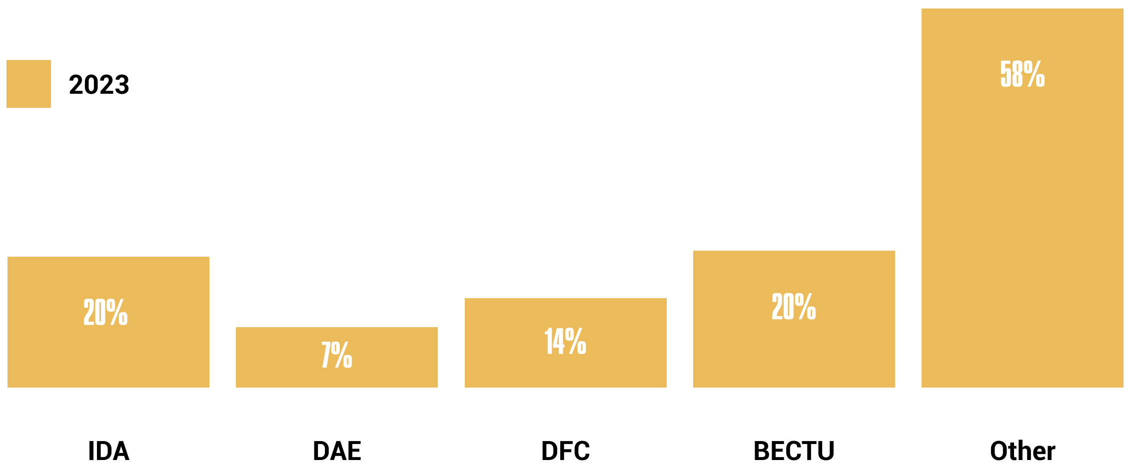
"We need more understanding and reasonable adjustments for disability and neuro-divergence throughout the process."

"The issue of mental health is not exclusive to one's occupation. Doctors, nurses, teachers, and many other professions have stressors. I'm never sure why documentarians see themselves as more mentally or emotionally challenged."

"My last documentary was about police brutality towards People of Color and that was overwhelming at one point. I did not have (mental health support)."

There are various organisations which exist to support documentary makers. This year for the first time **we asked our respondents whether they belonged to any of these (Q29)**. 62% were a member of at least one organization, with the International Documentary Association (IDA) and British union BECTU both selected by 20%. The much newer Documentary Film Council (DFC), which lobbies on behalf the UK's independent documentary industry, was selected by 14% and 7% are members of the Documentary Association of Europe (DAE).

Among the various organisations people mentioned were: the Documentary Producers Alliance, the Documentary Filmmakers Association of South Africa, Directors UK, the Documentary Association of Dominican Republic, Chiledoc, Documentary Guild of Finland and the Documentary Association of Pakistan.






"I THINK CHILDCARE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AN ACCESSIBILITY ISSUE."

# INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

## MAIN CHALLENGES FACED BY DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS

Following on from the persistent thread that has run through this report and reports in previous years, when **asked about the main challenges they faced as documentary filmmakers working today (Q51)**, the majority of respondents agreed that their most significant challenge was financial. Here is a selection of responses:

"It's just assumed that it's up to the director to figure out everything and shoulder the burden of working for free because it's "her/his" vision, as if it was a vanity project. I find the dynamic in the industry pretty unhealthy in that sense, directors get attacked for all kinds of stuff but the toll it takes on people working in those conditions should also be considered."

"The hassle to raise finance is too much in this industry and it's so painful starting all over again after each film."

"There is horrible ageism in documentary filmmaking. Not sure how to fix that as youth is so prized as if experience is a limitation to creativity and imagination."

"The biggest challenges are at either ends of the process, funding and distribution. Funding from investors is focused on sensationalist or celebrity doc series, and funding from organizations is focused on issue and identity films - so there is no interest in funding other films."

"The distribution model is broken, independent documentaries are not being acquired for significant amounts, so it is now almost impossible to make your budget back."



"Now as a mother with two young children, the cost of childcare and the difficulty in being freelance going from project to project is the biggest obstacle."

"Filmmakers are still expected to develop films and shoot financing trailers with their own resources, moreover, they are expected to film as much as possible before funders commit - and here the broadcasters are the biggest offenders - they take absolutely no risks, even with more established filmmakers, and do not participate in making our industry sustainable."

## HOW CAN THE DOCUMENTARY INDUSTRY BE IMPROVED?

**Following on from the challenging aspects of documentary filmmaking, we asked respondents to provide suggestions on how the industry could best be improved (Q52)**. Unsurprisingly, the issues respondents wished to be addressed reflected the challenges they themselves were facing. However, these verbatim comments provided more detailed observations on how working practices might be improved:

"Support for working parents - it creates a dynamic where women get sidelined and careers falter. I think childcare should be considered an accessibility issue."

"Levelling of pay gap and power imbalances between insecure low paid filmmakers who produce the primary "value" in the industry and salaried commissioners, funders, institutional execs, sales agents & distributors with higher job security and income."

"Create a chain of theatres and streamers for documentary films, including shorts."

"Tackling classism in the way disability, gender, race etc. are. I have been far more held back in this industry by being northern* than I have by being disabled (*from the traditionally more working-class areas of Northern England)."

"To keep standards high, budgets have to increase. If they cannot then commissioners' expectations have to be reconfigured accordingly, but audience expectation and market drivers make that very hard."

"A living SALARIED wage for independent documentary filmmakers."

"A global standard wage."

"Fairer working conditions for freelancers."

"We need more financial support for research and development."

"More collaborative approaches/less focus on "named" directing talent."

"Greater transparency. Open and honest conversations about funding - who gets it, how and how much, what makes a project or individual trustworthy or 'worth' repeat investment of finances or opportunities."

"A commitment to giving feedback from applications (this is pretty much non-existent and sometimes you don't even receive an acknowledgement). This can contribute to the growing sense of isolation documentary makers can feel, and also adds to the mystery of who gets funding and how."

"Better representation to the government on the precariousness of the industry. More support from broadcasters for freelancers in downturns."

"More slots for serious documentaries on TV and streamer commissions at realistic tariffs."

"I'd like to be able to make a living that proposes me a dignified life and the freedom to explore the artistic side."

"I'd like a system, that if your film does well, it receives points for every festival it goes to awards etc, then that turns into money for your next film."



# CONCLUSION

Despite some areas of hope, this year's survey shows that the existence of independent documentary is still precarious. This matters, we believe, because of something academics call the "parasocial contact hypothesis": in other words spending time with someone, or some idea, which is beyond one's narrow social experience breaks down prejudice, increases empathy and the prospect of change. In today's oppositional world, this counterweight to ideological entrenchment is surely needed now more than ever, but at what price?

For us the biggest shock has been the direct correlation between the number of established doc makers who are on the verge of giving up and the number who report poor mental health. Charitable funders are stepping up more, but also making increasing demands in terms of rights and returns on investment. It remains clear that a two-tier system of documentary making has emerged. On the one hand, there are the chosen few in whom eye-watering amounts of money are invested, with a view to Oscar and box office success. On the other hand, are the rest: important stories that will always struggle to find a voice.

Despite all of this, The Whickers are humbled by the resilience and perseverance of the respondents to this survey. We thank them for giving so much time and thought to their answers and salute them by giving one of them the last word:

***"I'd just like to be able to make a living that proposes me a dignified life and the freedom to explore the artistic side."***

# APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

**Q1.** What is your role? (Tick all that apply): Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor, Production Manager, Executive Producer, Camera Operator, Commissioner, Other (please specify)
**Q2.** How long have you worked in the documentary field?
**Q3.** Which of the following best describes your documentary training? Self- taught, Learnt 'on the job', Attended short course on documentary, Related undergraduate degree, Undergraduate degree in other subject, Postgraduate documentary qualification, Postgraduate qualification in an unrelated subject. **Q4.** Where do you live?
**Q5.** For which medium do you make documentaries? (Tick all that apply): TV, Film, Online, Virtual Reality, Radio/Podcast, Other (please specify)
**Q6**. In fewer than seven words, why do you make documentaries?
**Q7.** Are you currently working on a documentary?
**Q8.** If you are not currently making a documentary, have you worked on one in the last two years?
**Q9.** If you have completed a documentary in the last two years or are currently making one, were you/are you... Living off your savings, Working another job, Being supported by family or friends, Living off a student loan, Freelancing on other projects, In a full-time job in production or broadcasting, In a part-time job in production or broadcasting, In a full-time job unrelated to production or broadcasting, In a part-time job unrelated to production or broadcasting, Paying myself a wage from the production fund of my documentary, Not applicable, Other (please specify)
**Q10.** If you have completed a documentary in the last two years, how long did it take to finish (from development to delivery)?
**Q11.** Of that period, how many actual days were spent working on the documentary? (Not including time spent on other projects or on jobs outside of the documentary)
**Q12.** What was the duration of the above completed documentary?
**Q13**. If you had paid yourself what you consider an appropriate wage for each of these days of work, what would your time have cost?
**Q14.** Were you paid this amount?
**Q15.** What percentage of the time spent working on the project were you paid for?

**Q16.** Was this documentary made for... (Tick all that apply): TV, Film, Festival, Theatrical release, Online, Virtual Reality, Radio/ Podcast, Campaign, Love or personal satisfaction, Not applicable, Other (please specify)
**Q17.** How much was spent on the project? Or if the film in question is not yet finished, what is your total projected budget?
**Q18.** Have you ever applied for funding from any of the following? (Tick all that apply): A broadcaster, BFI Global Cinema Fund, Catapult Film Fund, Chicken & Egg Pictures Accelerator Lab, Cinereach, Creative Europe MEDIA Development: Single Project, Creative Europe, MEDIA Distribution, Creative Europe MEDIA Slate Funding, Creative Scotland, Derek Freese Documentary Fund, Doha Film Institute, Doc Society (formerly Britdoc), The Filmmaker Fund, The Fledgling Fund, Fork Films, Hot Docs, IDA Pare Lorentz Documentary Fund, IDA Enterprise Documentary Fund, IDFA Bertha Fund, Impact Partners Development Fund, JustFilms/Ford Foundation, One World Media Production Fund, Sundance Documentary Fund, Tribeca Film Institute Documentary Fund, Wellcome Institute Public Engagement Fund, The Whickers Funding Awards, Private Investor, I have not previously applied for funding, Other (please specify)
**Q19.** If yes, how much funding did you hope for?
**Q20.** How much funding did you receive?
**Q21.** If you were offered funding, what kind of involvement did the funder require?
**Q22.** Have you secured a sales/distribution deal?
**Q23**. If yes, can you tell us who the sales/distribution organization is?
**Q24.** Did you secure your sales/distribution deal as a result of them seeing your work at a festival or market?
**Q25.** Have you or are you intending to pay any money up front to the sales/ distribution organisation?
**Q26.** What is the sales/distribution organisation taking in return?
**Q27.** How satisfied are you with this arrangement?
**Q28.** In the last documentary you did, did you find you were being required to make payments to any organization which you had not foreseen?

**Q29.** Are you a member of any of these organisations supporting documentary? (Tick all that apply). IDA (International Documentary Association), DAE (Documentary Association of Europe), DFC (Documentary Film Council), Bectu (Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union), Other (please specify).
**Q30.** If applicable, approximately how many days of work in total including, the editing of teaser material, do you spend on a single funding application?
**Q31.** Have you used a crowdfunding platform to raise finance for a documentary?
**Q32.** If you answered yes to the previous question, what percentage of your budget was raised via crowdfunding?
**Q33.** Have you previously worked with a co-producer(s)? Please briefly comment on the experience.
**Q34.** Have you ever participated in a public pitch at a documentary film festival forum or market?
**Q35.** If yes, did this lead to funding for your film? Please comment briefly on how this experience impacted your project.
**Q36.** In light of COVID-19 many pitching forums have been hosted in a virtual space. Have you participated in any of these online forums?
**Q37.** Which of these options is your preference for pitching forums? In person, Online, Hybrid, No preference
**Q38.** On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend a move towards virtual pitching forums in the future?
**Q39.** Has a documentary that you have worked on ever been broadcast? If yes, where has this documentary been broadcast?
**Q40.** Has it been made publicly available to a paying audience?
**Q41.** Did you last documentary involve … (Tick all that apply): International travel, Undercover filming, Animation, Fixed rig, Editor hire, Reconstruction/Drama, Talent costs, Studio costs, Kit hire, Access payments, Translation, Soundtrack composition, Archive licensing, Music licensing, Office costs, Not applicable
**Q42.** Who paid for the majority of the elements in the last question?

**Q43.** If you used filming equipment, which of the following did you use? Film camera, HD Camcorder or high-quality video camera, Cinema camera e.g. red camera, Drone, DSLR, Action, 360-degree camera, Augmented reality, Smartphone, Not applicable, Other (please specify)
**Q44.** Which of the above did you use the most?
**Q45.** Which audio recorder did you mainly use? Zoom, Sound Devices, Tascam, Marantz, Nagra, Rode Reporter app, Smartphone, Not applicable, Other (please specify)
**Q46.** Which editing software was used? Adobe Premiere Pro, Final Cut Pro, Avid, Davinci Resolve, Not applicable, Other (please specify)
**Q47.** If you have previously made a documentary comparable in scale and budget, do you think the following costs are increasing, decreasing or staying the same? On screen talent, Translation costs, Soundtrack composition/music licensing, Security, Graphics, Distribution, Editing – facilities, Publicity, Archive costs, Pitching–including festival pass, trailer production, Filming - facilitation fees/location fees, Filming – insurance, Research and development, Post-production - colour grading and sound mix, Filming - equipment hire (incl. lighting, cameras, sound), Filming -crew, Editing - staff, Travel.
**Q48.** Is there anything that you have cut back on in order to reduce costs?
**Q49.** To what extent has the rising cost of living impacted your ability to make documentaries?
**Q50.** This question is about the emotional toll of documentary making. Thinking back to your last documentary, did you: (tick all that apply) …. Feel the need for any form of mental health support, Know where to look for mental health support, Feel unable to afford mental health support, Feel that mental health support is overrated, I have never felt the need for mental health support, Other (please specify)
**Q51.** What is the main challenge that you face as a documentary-maker?
**Q52.** Which three things would you like to see improve within the documentary film industry and how?
**Q53.** Would you be happy for us to include your verbatim comments anonymously in the published report?

**Q54.** Would you like to be added to our mailing list and to be in with a chance of winning a complimentary pass to attend Sheffield DocFest 2024? If so, please provide your email address below.
**Q55.** Age
**Q56.** Gender.
**Q57.** Ethnic background.
**Q58.** Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

# JOIN THE CONVERSATION

@whickerawards
#CostofDocs

whickerawards.com